

SAFETY TOPIC: Night VFR Flight Risks

Happy fall, everyone! This month, our safety topic is night VFR flying and the potential risks of early morning or late evening operations this time of year.

In my opinion, night flying can be some of the most enjoyable flying we do. The air is smoother, traffic is reduced, and the views are stunning. However, night VFR also introduces hazards that may not be as prevalent during the day. Reduced visual references, changing weather, obscured terrain, fatigue, and visual illusions can all increase risk. A

flight that may be routine during the day can become much more challenging at night, especially over sparsely populated areas with little ground lighting.

As always, good preparation begins before departure. Pilots should carefully review weather conditions, cloud ceilings, visibility, terrain, airport lighting, and available alternate airports along the route. It is also important to do a thorough preflight, specifically verifying that all required aircraft lighting is working properly. Additionally, maintaining situational awareness and utilizing instrumentation-based flying skills is especially important on some darker nights, since nights over rural areas, water, or unlit



terrain can make it difficult to distinguish the ground from the sky and may increase the risk of spatial disorientation.

Night flying may also reduce the number of options available during an emergency situation. An engine failure during the day may provide several visible fields, roads, or other suitable landing areas, yet at night those same options can be difficult or impossible to identify. When it is possible, planning routes near airports, populated or lit areas, and avoiding unfavorable terrain (such as the wind farms up in NW Indiana) can help provide safer alternates if something does go awry. Fatigue, particularly while flying solo, is also a consideration, as a pilot who may have felt completely alert during an afternoon flight may not perform at the same level several hours later.

Night VFR is great flying and does not have to be avoided. However, it should be approached with additional preparation and caution. Taking a few extra minutes to plan can make a significant difference to the safety of your operation. Like many areas of aviation safety, preventing an accident often comes down to recognizing the hazards early, mitigating risks the best we can, and making good decisions before ever going up in the air.

AUTHOR: Matthew Degner, CFI/CFII, IGI

Upcoming Board Elections!

Our October monthly meeting hosts the annual board elections. We have **two** general board positions up for election, as well as we are **always looking for interested members to be President or head a committee**. Committee chairs don't necessarily have to be on the board.

This is a great opportunity to become more involved with the chapter, help with ongoing initiatives, or start one of your own! If you would be interested in being on the board, please reach out to John Tunell at jtunell.av8r@gmail.com

We have 4 returning board members that will be on the ballot in October.

Kyle Smith
Dan Villiger
Kate Russell
Bill Batten

Noah Shatto and James Yrineo have decided to step down from the board. Thank you to both James and Noah for all your hard work and dedication to the chapter! We are excited to still have them around as social members.

The voting ballot (google forms survey) will be sent in a separate email as the time gets closer. Alternatively, at the October Monthly gathering (10/16) you will be able to vote in person!

August Chapter Summer BBQ Event

Back in August we hosted our end of summer cookout event and it was a huge success! We love seeing all our members and their families at the hangar, enjoying the weather, and making new friends. At the event we also announced and recognized our 2026 Ray Scholars **Advait Aras and Dane Gregory!** Read more on them below at 'EAA 729 Ray Aviation Scholarship Program'



Thank you to all the chapter members who brought sides and snacks as well as our favorite chapter chef **James Yrineo** for running the grill!

September Monthly Gathering

Resident chapter member, former DPE, and Master CFI Larry Bothe gave a great presentation on checklist design and use this month! One of the biggest takeaways was simple: **airplanes change, but their checklists often don't**. Older aircraft may now have GPS units, modern radios, ADS-B, autopilots, fuel monitors, and other equipment that never appeared on the original checklist. A good custom checklist should reflect the airplane as it exists today, retaining necessary manufacturer items while removing references to equipment no longer installed and adding procedures for new equipment. Checklists should also follow a logical order and remain easy to read rather than cramming too much information into a small space.

For instructors, it is also important to remember that manufacturer checklists often assume a level of knowledge that brand-new students simply don't have. Adding helpful details for radio and avionics setup, taxi preparation, and commonly forgotten procedures can give students more confidence and independence while reducing the need for constant reminders from the instructor. When creating a new checklist, Larry recommends printing it on plain paper and using it for several flights before laminating it. Let other pilots or students try it as well. The questions they ask and the items they still miss can quickly show where the checklist needs improvement. Once it has been tested, corrected, and refined, it is ready to become the checklist you actually want in the airplane.

EAA 729 Ray Aviation Scholarship Program

EAA Chapter 729 was awarded two matching Ray Aviation Scholarships from the national EAA Ray Foundation for 2026! For each scholarship, the chapter contributes \$3,000, while the Ray Foundation provides the remaining \$9,000, for a total award of \$12,000 per scholar.



Your EAA 729 2026 Ray Scholars are **Advait Aras** (right above) and **Dane Gregory** (left above)! Advait and Dane were both selected due to their year by year interest in becoming a pilot, and exceptional performance in our Jump Start

program. Both scholars have already successfully passed the Private Pilot Written Test and have both already begun their flight training with CFI Justin Olhava at Jet Access KBAK!

We anticipate awarding another Ray Scholarship in early 2027. If you or someone you know may be interested, eligibility information, requirements, applications, and FAQs are available at [Scholarships – EAA Chapter 729](#). Additional questions can be directed to eaachapter729rayscholarship@gmail.com.

Youth and Adult Build Updates

Progress continues on the Zenith 650! The students have been hard at work on the wings, while the adult builders have begun installing the landing gear. Everything is moving along well, and the next project will be building wing racks to safely store and support the wings as work continues.

We are actively looking for more help with the Youth Zenith build or proposals and hosts of student engagement activities! We are so excited that there is an abundance of youth participation in the AYC (Aviation Youth Center), however that also means we are looking for interested adult mentors and builders to assist in Zenith specific projects, or alternatively, bring something else to the table for the students to do! If you or someone you know might be interested, please reach out to Brad Stinebring at blstinebring@comcast.net!

A neat fun-fact is that our new Ray Scholars will be presenting to the AYC students each month, giving a 1-2 hour presentation on a private pilot subject they are actively working on in their training!

For real-time updates and behind-the-scenes moments from both build projects, follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/ea729 and on Instagram at instagram.com/eaachapter729.

Member Minute: Checkrides Galore



EAA Chapter 729 has a new private pilot! Shanauk Chandwadker passed his private pilot checkride on September 25th this past month with the help of fellow chapter member and Young Eagles Coordinator Ryan Malanoski (CFI/CFII)!

Congratulations Shaunak!

Additionally, Dominik Piper, a routine Young Eagles volunteer pilot, successfully passed his additional category Helicopter Private Pilot checkride on July 24th. We hope to see the helicopter at Young Eagles soon!

Congratulations Dominik!

Those two weren't the only ones passing checkrides... EAA 729 Vice President Kate Russell also finished her Multiengine Instructor Rating on October 5th!



Another highlight as of late is that members Kate Russell and Matthew Degner completed recurrent and initial (respectively) CE-500 SIC training in a CE-500/550 Citation II! The FAA recently adapted the laws around single pilot flying in these types of jets. The low down is that these jets will be mandated to have SICs again. If you know any Citation 500 series operators, reach out to Kate and Matthew at cbuskate@gmail.com and matthew.a.degner@gmail.com

More interesting info on the rule change: [FAA Will Rescind and Cancel Cessna Citation Single-pilot Exemptions for Certain Models | Aviation International News](#)



Help us celebrate the diverse aviation experiences within our chapter community!

How to Submit: Send your stories, articles, or photos to Kate Russell at cbuskate@gmail.com. Help us celebrate the diverse aviation experiences within our chapter community!

Cool Reads:

Joby Aviation Inc. has claimed a new milestone in aviation history after completing a fully autonomous transcontinental flight across the United States. The flight utilized a retrofitted Cessna 208 Caravan, equipped with Joby's J208 autonomous flight technology. It spanned 3,199 miles across 10 states with zero control inputs from the onboard safety pilot.

<https://www.aopa.org/news-and-media/all-news/2026/september/24/joby-j208-makes-transcontinental-history>

REMINDERS:

Pam's Place Fall Fling Fly-In! (EAA 729 Fly-out)

EAA 729 will be headed to the Pam's Place Airport for their annual Fall Fling here in a few weeks! The fall fling is a multiple day event where participants are encouraged to camp out with their aircraft and hang out on the field. There will be a Fish Fry Friday night (10/9) at 6:00pm, breakfast Saturday & Sunday (10/10, 10/11) 7:30-10:30am, and a campfire and outdoor movie Friday and Saturday.

Fall fling fly in

Pam's Place Airport

[About](#) [Discussion](#)

Details

- 117 people responded
- Event by Pam's Place Airport
- Pam's Place Airport
- Duration: 2 days
- Public · Anyone on or off Facebook

Fall fling October 3rd - 5th. Fish fry Friday at 6 pm . Breakfast Saturday & Sunday 7:30-10:30
campfire and outdoor movie Friday and Saturday. Bring a tent and camp out

**The information in this photo is outdated. The new dates per their facebook page are October 9th -11th*

We are encouraging interested chapter members to join us for breakfast on Saturday, October 10th!

All interested pilots or passengers can register for the fly-out with EAA 729 at [Fly-Outs – EAA Chapter 729](https://eaa729.org/fly-outs/) (<https://eaa729.org/fly-outs/>).

Upcoming Chapter Events and Gatherings

October Monthly Gathering

Thursday, October 15th at 6:30 PM

Atterbury-Bakalar Air Museum - 4742 Ray Boll Blvd,
Columbus, IN 47203

Our October Meeting will be at the Atterbury-Bakalar Air Museum at the airport. There, we will host our annual board elections before having the opportunity to explore both the museum and C119.



November Monthly Gathering

Thursday, November 19th at 6:00 PM

EAA Chapter Hangar - 4750 Kelly St Columbus, IN 47203

In November we will be joined by Vice President and *almost meteorologist Kate Russell for a presentation on some interesting weather charts/maps/techniques that you don't always see in aviation, but could be useful to you!

Chapter Holiday Gathering [December]

Thursday, December 17th at 6:00 PM

EAA Chapter Hangar - 4750 Kelly St Columbus, IN 47203

In December we will host our annual Chapter Holiday Gathering at the hangar and celebrate a year to review together! We will celebrate the chapter and its members accomplishments as well as enjoy a performance from our members Kate Russell and Noah Shatto's band "PilotsWithGuitars"!

Chapter members are encouraged to bring snacks, desserts and general hors 'd'oeuvres to share with the chapter.



2026 Young Eagles

September 19th Young Eagles Day:

Even after a delayed start due to morning visibility and fewer pilots than normal due to various maintenance events, we had a fantastic September YE rally - Finally starting to cool off a little!

Thank you to all the ground volunteers, pilots, and young eagles who assisted with our August Young Eagles Rally! We flew 36 Young Eagles at this event!

PILOT NAME	FLIGHTS	YOUTH FLOWN	GIRLS	BOYS	UNDISCLOSED GENDER	FIRST FLIGHT	RETURN YE	AGES									
Kate Russell	2	6	0	6	0	1	5	Age 8 0	Age 9 1	Age 10 1	Age 11 0	Age 12 1	Age 13 2	Age 14 0	Age 15 0	Age 16 0	Age 17 1
Eric Scheidt	5	15	2	13	0	1	14	Age 8 4	Age 9 0	Age 10 2	Age 11 2	Age 12 4	Age 13 1	Age 14 1	Age 15 1	Age 16 0	Age 17 0
Dominic Piper	5	15	5	10	0	0	15	Age 8 3	Age 9 2	Age 10 1	Age 11 4	Age 12 0	Age 13 4	Age 14 1	Age 15 0	Age 16 0	Age 17 0

- May 9, 2026
- June 13, 2026
- August 8, 2026
- September 19, 2026
- October 17 <<<< Next and Final Upcoming Rally

Each rally runs from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM, with registration opening one month prior to each event. Flight reservations can be made at <http://eaachapters.org>. Follow the calendar at eaa729.org and our social media (@eaachapter729 on Facebook and Instagram) for updates!

If you are interested in volunteering with the Young Eagles Program either as a pilot or ground volunteer, please visit [Young Eagles Resources for Chapters and Volunteer Pilots](#) | [EAA AirVenture Oshkosh](#) for more information and contact Ryan Malanoski rkmalanoski@gmail.com to get started!

Friendly Reminder: 2026 Chapter Dues

This year is closing out! We kindly remind all EAA 729 members to submit their 2026 chapter dues. Your continued support helps cover essential expenses like hangar maintenance and the food we all enjoy during our gatherings. Every dollar you contribute goes directly back into benefiting the chapter and its members.

Not sure of your current status? Reach out to **Bill Batten**, he will be happy to help. Thank you for being a vital part of our aviation family!

If you are interested in becoming an EAA 729 Lifetime member, visit <https://eaa729.org/shop/> and select "Lifetime Membership"

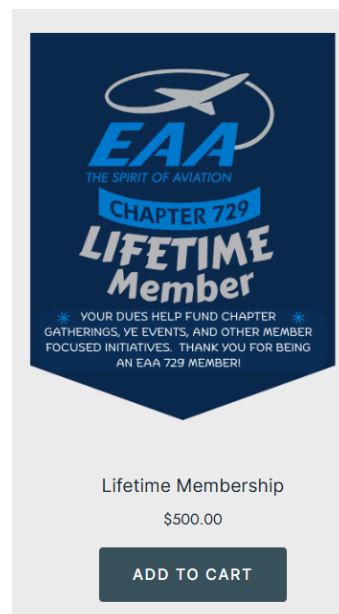
Special Recognition for new lifetime members Abby Halsmer and Bill Batten

Submit Your Accomplishments and Updates!

We want to hear from you! Chapter 729 is always looking for member-contributed content to feature in our monthly newsletter. Whether you've achieved a new rating, reached a building milestone, completed an interesting flight, or have an aviation story to share, we'd love to include it.

We're looking for aviation achievements and milestones, personal aircraft build project updates, interesting flying experiences or trips, aviation-related articles or insights, and photos from your aviation adventures.

How to Submit: Send your stories, articles, or photos to Kate Russell at cbuskate@gmail.com. Help us celebrate the diverse aviation experiences within our chapter community!



CONTACTS/LINKS/SCHOLARSHIPS/ETC.:

Website: eaa729.org

Facebook: facebook.com/eaa729

Instagram: instagram.com/eaachapter729.

Board Contacts

John Tunell (President) - jtunell.av8r@gmail.com

Kate Russell (Vice President) - cbuskate@gmail.com

Bill Batten (Treasurer) - williamabatten@gmail.com

Larry Kelly (Secretary) - lostaviator@gmail.com

Ryan Malanoski (Y.E. Coordinator) - rkmalanoski@gmail.com

James Yrineo - jfyrineo@gmail.com

Kyle Smith - mister.meow@icloud.com

Jason Tepool - jasontepool@gmail.com

Noah Shatto - gonefishingaway@gmail.com

Dan Villiger - dan.villiger@sbcglobal.net

Brad Stinebring - blstinebring@comcast.net

Committee Chairs/Contacts

Building Maintenance – Brad Stinebring

Young Eagles – Ryan Malanoski / Kate Russell

Website / Marketing – John Tunell / Kate Russell

Tool Crib – Larry Kelly

Youth Programs – Brad Stinebring

Aircraft Build – James Yrineo / Jason Tepool

Flight Simulator - James Yrineo, Ryan Malanoski, and Kyle Smith

Newsletter – John Tunell / Kate Russell

Ray Scholar – Brad Stinebring / Kate Russell

EAA HQ Liability Insurance – Ryan Malinowski

Social Media – James Yrineo / John Tunell / Kate Russell / Ryan Malinowski

Fly-Outs - Matthew Degner (matthew.a.degner@gmail.com)

EAA & AOPA Airshow Schedules

AOPA Events - <https://www.aopa.org/news-and-media/news-by-topic/events/airshow>

EAA Events - <https://www.eaa.org/ea/events>

Scholarships

EAA and AOPA Scholarship Cycles **Open October 1st!**

[Aviation Scholarships](#) | [Flight Training Scholarships](#) | [EAA](#)

[AOPA Flight Training Scholarships](#) - [AOPA](#)

EAA Chapter 729 will reopen the Jump Start and Ray Scholarship Applications in early 2027. It is recommended to visit [Scholarships – EAA Chapter 729](#) and work on meeting eligibility and preferred scholar qualifications early!

Opportunities

 **DO YOU LOVE AVIATION?**
JOIN THE WOMEN IN AVIATION
BAKALAR CHAPTER

What is it? The Bakalar Chapter is a Women in Aviation International Chapter based right here at the Columbus Municipal Airport in Columbus Indiana!

Who Can Join? Both Women and Men
Junior Members: Ages 5-15 with Parent
Student Members: Ages 16-18
Members: Ages 18+

WHEN AND WHERE?
SECOND WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH AT 6:30PM
COLUMBUS MUNICIPAL AIRPORT TERMINAL BASEMENT
(CHANGES IN LOCATION AND TIME WILL BE POSTED ON SOCIAL MEDIA)

Why should I Join?
Meet people that share a love for Aviation
Networking/Resume building
Chance to hold leadership roles
Learn more about Aviation
Be eligible for Scholarships
Have Fun!

2026 MEETINGS

MAY 13	SEP 9
JUNE 13	OCT 17
JULY 8	NOV 11
AUG 12	DEC 9

LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION?
INSTAGRAM: BAKALAR_WAI
FACEBOOK: WAI BAKALAR CHAPTER
WEBSITE: [HTTPS://WWW.WAITHESBAKALARCHAPTER.COM/](https://www.waithesbakalarchapter.com/)
EMAIL QUESTIONS: HFRIEDEN@COLUMBUS.IN.GOV



Interested in being involved with Women in Aviation? Join in on the fun with the Bakalar chapter at any of their meetings this year...

WAI BAKALAR CHAPTER:
OCTOBER MEETING

WHEN: WEDNESDAY,
OCTOBER 28TH AT
5:45PM, BALLOON IN AIR
AT 6:45PM

WHERE: COLUMBUS
MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

WHAT: COME JOIN US TO
LAUNCH OUR OWN MEMBER
CHRIS RASKOB'S HOT AIR
BALLOON ALONG WITH OUR
NEW ELECTIONS

BALLOON WILL BE UP AT DARK
TO TAKE PHOTOS OF AND
TUTORIAL TO HELP PUT
TOGETHER STARTING AT 5:45
(WEATHER PENDING) WITH
FOOD PROVIDED!
FAMILY AND FRIENDS WELCOME!

