

Pace of Innovation

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General Aviation is Back! By the time this is printed, I will have attended the Experimental Aircraft Association's AirVenture for the second year in a row. For years, I had heard how large the event was and it really is! There is always something to do or see.

One significant thing I've seen this week dovetails very well with my goal of supporting STEM education for all students – EAA and their sponsors have significantly reduced the price of admission to students up to 18 years of age! As in, FREE! Further, there are lots of exhibits with STEM events for every age group from KidVenture to the exhibits scattered about the grounds. This week one of their summer camp events was aimed at girls in high school called GirlVenture. I was fortunate enough to stumble across a group of these young women last year over in Warbirds and chatted with them for several minutes (they had to listen to my pep talk on staying in school, doing well, and setting goals). Watching the wonder and awe on young people's faces as they learn about aviation and then watch the airshow is positively heartwarming. EAA had set up simulators for interested young people to experience controlling an aircraft and it was one of the busiest tents. And, it had air conditioning. I got lots of ideas for future STEM efforts while there. I personally encourage each of you to get involved with your local schools, youth groups, and flight schools. We have to replace ourselves someday and we need these young people to get enthused.



I was also fortunate to attend an AbleFlight event and watched four people be awarded wings. AbleFlight sponsors individuals with physical challenges in pursuing flight training. Working with flight programs and modified flight decks, people who would not otherwise have the opportunity have slipped the surly bounds of Earth. How can we as aerospace medicine professionals expand this to get more people in our field? Do we need to switch from rules-based decision making to performance-based? What will it take to be more inclusive? I think we need to be open to opportunities at every turn.

On a personal note, last year I was fortunate to actually fly into Oshkosh in our Harvard Mk4 (think T-6 or SNJ but built in Canada). We had hoped to make the trip in our newly restored Stearman so I could personally land here. Maybe next year. For those of you who are pilots, it was an amazing experience and well worth the trip.

I hope to see many of you in Paris for ICAM. Fly safe!

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