



All Things CHICAGO

A cup of coffee and a Chicago style Hot Dog!

All Things Chicago – Chapter 973 April Gathering

Plot twist: The Chapter 973 April Gathering was nothing like we planned... and that's exactly why it was awesome.

Original plan? A chilled social + fun navigation rally with Krugersdorp Flying Club.
Reality? Life threw us a curveball — and this time it was a home run!

Two weeks out, our phones buzzed. Arnie Quast, EAA Chapter 932 President from Galt Airport, Illinois, had surprise leave in April. United Airlines pulled some magic, moved his flights forward, and suddenly our April Gathering got a serious upgrade.

Arnie didn't just bring himself. He brought a full insider's tour of Chapter 932 — the people, the planes, the stories. **But why stop at a slideshow?**



Our guests of honour – Arnie and Dawn with Laura

We flew in the REAL DEAL: authentic Chicago style Hot Dogs.

Yes, the ingredients touched down straight from the Windy City. Neon-green relish, gardineira and mustard - the works. No ketchup allowed. Chicago rules.

Our guests landed late Friday night. Quick pit stop for dinner with Brian and Trish (aviation legend Bill Lee-Smith's daughter), then lights out. Saturday dawned early and we hit the road to Krugersdorp, sleep levels: adequate, caffeine levels: critical.



Hot Dog Stand – ready to go!

Chapter 973's hangar? Gleaming. The 973 crew? Fired up. Coffee machines? Roaring. And that hot dog stand? Commissioned, loaded, and ready to sling pure Chicago magic.

09h00 sharp — no time for frills, busy day ahead. Arnie took the mic and nailed it. His flying career, Chapter 932, Galt Airport... turns out we've got more in common with our Illinois cousins than we thought!

Post-Gathering, we teamed up with Krugersdorp Flying Club for that fun nav exercise, then kicked back for a packed social day. Planes, dogs, and good company — what more do you want?

Sometimes the best flight plans are the ones you never filed!

What makes a Chicago style Hot Dog?



A classic Chicago-style hot dog is an all-beef frankfurter served on a steamed poppy or sesame seed bun, topped in a specific order: yellow mustard, neon green relish, chopped onions, tomato wedges, a pickle spear, sport peppers, and celery salt. Key rules are: **never use ketchup**



The Navex briefing by KFC Safety Officer Reyno Coetzer



Geoff, Kevin and Phil admire our beautiful 973 view

EAA Chapter 973 May Gathering Saturday 9th May

Pieter Geldenhuys – A military and surveillance drone too big for SA Airspace



Photo Album

Saturday 11th April



WINGS ACROSS CONTINENTS

Wings Across Continents: An EAA Adventure from Illinois to the African Bush By Laura McDermid

For over two decades, the South African EAA Chapter 322 has made its home next door to The Ponderosa, home of EAA Chapter 932 in Camp Scholler—long before the official Chapter Camping programme was even a twinkle in anyone’s eye.

Over the years, a genuine bond has developed between the two chapters, strengthened particularly during the Covid years when shared Zoom gatherings kept the connection alive. The Galt crowd has warmly hosted Neil, Carolyn, family, and friends—complete with airfield cookouts and memorable plane rides. In return, the South African group has spent years gently persuading Dawn and Arnie to make the trip to South Africa.

At last, the plans came together. Chapter 932 President Arnie and his wife Dawn made the journey, with their first stop at the newly revived EAA Chapter 973 at Jack Taylor Airport in Krugersdorp. They arrived in time for the chapter’s April Gathering, themed “Chicago.” Arnie delivered a lively presentation on his aviation career, Chapter 932, and life at Galt Airport, while Chicago-style hot dogs –



Laura and Stuart getting ready for the “hop” to Polokwane International

ingredients specially flown in from the Windy City - were served to the delighted crowd. The following day, the real adventure began: a safari trip into Botswana with three aircraft and a backup vehicle. EAAers Ant and Brenda took their RV-7A, Laura and Stuart flew their Alpi Pioneer, and Neil and Arnie piloted the Sling. The group set off for Polokwane Civil, a straightforward 1.5-hour leg.



The 3 aircraft – border clearance at FAPP

We had been monitoring the weather obsessively for a week, and by Saturday it was clear we had only a narrow window—rain was forecast both at Krugersdorp and in Polokwane. We departed FAKR around 12h30 and headed north. The thermic air acted like a magnet for vultures, forcing us to scan the skies constantly for these massive birds. As we approached the Pietersburg highway, the sky darkened, and we had to make quick decisions to dodge shafts of grey cloud while giving the Waterberg mountains a wide berth en route to Potgietersrus Civil.

We landed within 15 minutes of one another and received a warm welcome. We topped up the aircraft with Avgas and while waiting for our ground support, filed flight plans and grabbed a quick meal at the restaurant before heading to a quaint little hotel on the edge of town for a well-earned beer and a good night’s sleep.

The next morning we returned to the civil airfield for a short, uneventful hop to Polokwane International to clear customs. After sorting the paperwork and fortifying ourselves with coffee, we were ready for the next leg. The Sling 2, had been cleared to taxi, and was almost clear of the apron when a vibration forced Neil to abort. The culprit: a flat nosewheel.



EAAers in action, limited tools and resources, but resulting in a fixed flat

What followed was a swift shift from Plan B to Plan C when Neil realised he had no tools with him. The McDermids came to the rescue with a spare tube, tools, and a compressor—but the Allen keys didn't fit the spats. A relay of fire trucks and support vehicles ensued until someone unearthed a pair of rusty "El-Em" (Allen) keys in a toolbox.

The tyre was inflated just enough to taxi the aircraft behind the emergency vehicle bay, where the team got to work. Stuart, with the most experience handling flat tyres, took charge of the job and with help from the rest of the guys were able to undo the stubborn bolts and split the hub in order to remove the offending tube.



Crossing the Limpopo – the border between South Africa and Botswana

All the while, the early-morning wispy clouds were building into proper cumulus, and the sun beat down mercilessly.

By midday the repair was complete, flight plans were reactivated, and the formation departed on runway 05 for the 1 hour flight to Limpopo Valley Airfield. We were handed over to Makhado, who guided us around military airspace and the imposing mountain that looms over the town. Once again, we kept a sharp lookout for vultures, thermalling in groups of half a dozen, sometimes riding the cloud base at 8,000 feet.

Below us, the landscape unfolded in lush, verdant shades—rain had left the earth looking remarkably fertile. Soon the swollen Limpopo River came into view, snaking east to west and bisecting South Africa from Botswana. We called Limpopo Valley 30 minutes out, but received no response. They eventually answered Ant when they were overhead Pont Drift. We were all cleared to land on runway 12 and guided to our parking spots for the next three nights.



Limpopo Valley Airfield, Botswana

After securely tying down the aircraft, we were ushered into the building—first thoroughly sanitising our shoes for foot-and-mouth disease. Customs and immigration took place in a tiny thatched building. Despite the remote

setting, parking fees were steep, and the officials displayed the particular brand of grumpiness that comes with small-time authority. Brenda, not wearing a reflective vest, was threatened with a fine for walking the 20 metres from the aircraft to the gate in broad daylight with no other traffic in sight. In the end they settled for charging her a passenger fee instead. Our scant belongings were searched, and we were free to go—except there were no customs officials present, so we had to detour via Pont Drift border post to have our passports stamped.



With our bags strapped to the roof, we were soon on our way!

With formalities finally complete, we faced a hot, bumpy 1.5-hour drive detour to Mohave Camp, as the river was too full to cross directly. The discomfort was quickly forgotten with roadside sightings of zebra, giraffe, wildebeest, and elephants—a perfect reminder of the treasures that awaited.

We reached camp late that afternoon, were shown to our chalets, and were soon whisked off on a quick sunset drive by Joe, our expert field guide and chauffeur. The horizon blazed fiery yellow as the sun sank, turning the once-white puffy clouds into soft pinks and purples. It's that magical hour when the earth seems to exhale, the animals settle, and the bush falls briefly silent before the night chorus begins. Arnie and Dawn were captivated by the remarkable transition. This, they discovered, is Africa.

The next morning we rose early for the first of two bush drives. Joe tracked a pride of lions lounging in a riverbed soaking up the morning sun. We parked on the bank and watched two black eagles soaring along a ridge, relentlessly harried by a much smaller peregrine falcon that swooped from above. Soon an African harrier-hawk joined the fray, taunting the falcon in turn. It was a thrilling aerial power struggle among



Our guide, Joe, and his vehicle - heading out for our first bush drive



A thrilling arial power struggle

top predators—a stark reminder of the brutality behind the beauty.

The bush teemed with life, from tiny elephant shrews to the largest land mammal on earth. We returned to a hearty brunch, after which the children played in the plunge pool while the adults read and dozed until the evening drive.



Brown Hyena – a rare sight

This time Joe found us a pair of brown hyenas - elusive, shy creatures whose sightings are usually just a fleeting glimpse of shaggy brown fur disappearing into the shadows. The mother stayed safely behind rocks, peering out with a black snout and fluffy ears that gave her more the look of a German shepherd than her spotted cousin. Higher up on a rocky outcrop, one of her teenage pups foraged unconcerned by our

presence. We watched it for nearly an hour until darkness fell. What a privilege to observe these unusual animals up close—their sloped backs, shaggy coats, and striped legs almost alien in appearance.

That evening we turned in early. Arnie and Dawn were still battling jet lag, and the rest of us were weary from the journey. During the night, the motion-triggered light outside their chalet suddenly illuminated a hulking black shape. At first Arnie was bewildered—until he realised it was an elephant. Having never seen one in the wild, the couple found the apparition alarming. Would it charge? Was it after something in their room? Fortunately, the gentle giant was simply taking a shortcut to the watering hole, completely uninterested in its human neighbours.



Dawn and Arnie - sundowners in the African bush

The following morning Joe took us back to the lions, who had been unusually quiet overnight—a good sign they had hunted successfully. He was right: the pride was still in the riverbed, younger cubs gnawing on a zebra leg while the adults lay sprawled, bellies bloated. We watched contentedly; the thrill never fades, even for seasoned Africans. Upstream, black-backed jackals yelped and shouted. Joe suspected they had seen a leopard and suggested we try to find it. We didn't succeed, but it was another marvellous drive all the same.

That evening we enjoyed sundowners accompanied by a wild orchestra of fiery-necked nightjars, whooping hyenas, and roaring lions—a symphony that could rival any classical master.



Our bush walk – overlooking the beautiful African plains

Our final morning included a bush walk up the hill where we had watched the black eagles the day before. Joe gave us a thorough briefing on how to behave on foot, recounting past incidents with elephants that had ended badly for both humans and animals. We walked among stone ruins believed to date back to the 1600s, marvelling at the ancient skills evident in the kraals built from jumbled red and golden sandstone. The geology of the Limpopo Mobile Belt and vast Kalahari sands—added to the sense of deep time.

That afternoon we relocated to Serolo Camp, closer to the border for an earlier departure the next day. The afternoon drive followed the mighty Limpopo beneath the majestic canopies of Mashatu trees (also known as Nyala berry trees, though we saw none of the antelope). That evening we were treated to a magical candlelit dinner in the bush, set up by Julie and her team from Tuli Wilderness Adventures. Soft light danced off wine glasses and cutlery as two pearl-spotted owlets serenaded us with accelerating fluted whistles that built to a drawn-out wail.

The next morning we made the reciprocal trip to the border post to be stamped out, then headed quickly to the airfield. During pre-flight checks, Neil discovered stones and sticks jammed into

an air vent—clearly not an accident. A rather sad comment on airfield security, especially given the hefty parking fees and the earlier fuss over the reflective vest.

As we flew south toward Polokwane, the clouds thickened and lowered, holding us at 5,500 feet. Polokwane tower declared IMC conditions, leaving the Pioneer and Sling orbiting while they handled incoming traffic. Customs on the return was more bureaucratic, with multiple documents required from the “drivers” of each aircraft, followed by police clearance and landing fees.

The final leg back to FAKR was uneventful, with only isolated thunderstorms that were easily avoided.

In hindsight, flying directly into the Alldays airstrip would have been far simpler. It would have avoided the need for special permits to enter Botswana, the customs clearance at Polokwane International, and the considerable expense of those permits and the exorbitant Botswana parking fees.

That said, it was a truly great adventure—especially for our two American guests, who experienced the African bush for the very first time. From Chicago style hot dogs to lion kills and candlelit dinners under the stars, it was a journey none of us will soon forget.

The hangar will be open every Saturday for coffee, breakfast available at 26 South Restaurant
PLEASE MONITOR OUR 973 WHATSAPP CHAT GROUP FOR UPDATES ON FLY-AWAYS, FLY-INS AND OTHER EVENTS

Saturday 9th May | Chapter Monthly Gathering | 09h00

Chapter 973 Monthly Gathering, Pieter

Geldenhuys' presentation

will feature another incredible local product, an anti-poaching drone, designed and built right

here in South Africa, followed by our **Monthly Hands-on Workshop**

by Kevin Hopper



Our **Monthly Workshop** will take place during the morning – replacing brake linings and how to use the brake lining tool properly. This simple task can be easily performed by NTCA owners. Our hands-on workshop series are planned to help members save money and maintain safe standards in operating their aircraft.

Saturday 23rd May | FAKR

Please join us at Jack Taylor Airfield for an historic EAA breakfast fly-in to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of this iconic aircraft!

All de Havilland aircraft – Chipmunks, Tiger Moths ... will be allocated pride of place parking on “Chipmunk Alley” and **all** aviators are invited to this historic fly-in event!

Breakfast and coffee served from 08h00



Saturday 13th June | Monthly Gathering & Young Eagle's Rally | FAKR

It's International Young Eagles Day, join us as we join the world in Mission 2.5, a mission to have flown 2.5 million Young Eagles by the start of Oshkosh 2026!

Pilots, planes and ground crew needed!

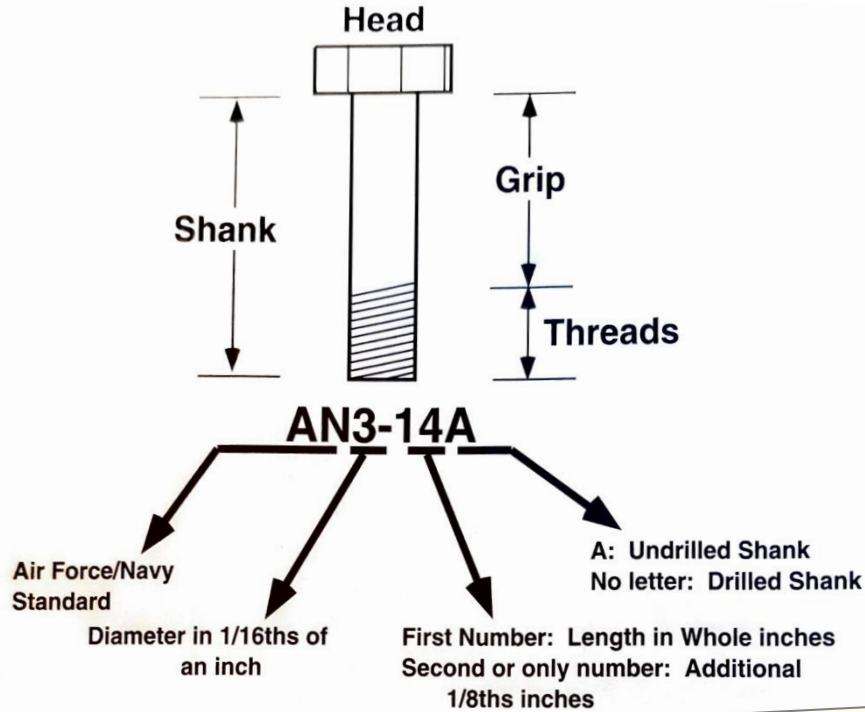
“When a volunteer pilot provides a Young Eagles flight, they are not just flying, they are shaping the future of flight, one Young Eagles flight at a time.”





BOLT NOMENCLATURE

This month, under the auspices of our chapter technical officer, Kevin Hopper, Chapter 973 begins a regular series of shop tips, aircraft construction and repair tips to help with safety and doing things right.



APPROXIMATE GRIP LENGTH						
Dash Number	AN3	AN4	AN5	AN6	AN7	AN8
3	1/16	1/16	-	-	-	-
4	1/8	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16
5	1/4	3/16	3/16	3/16	3/16	3/16
6	3/8	5/16	5/16	5/16	5/16	5/16
7	1/2	7/16	7/16	7/16	7/16	7/16
10	5/8	9/16	9/16	9/16	9/16	9/16
11	3/4	11/16	11/16	11/16	11/16	11/16
12	7/8	13/16	13/16	13/16	13/16	13/16
13	1	15/16	15/16	15/16	15/16	15/16
14	1 1/8	1 1/16	1 1/16	1 1/16	1 1/16	1 1/16
15	1 1/4	1 3/16	1 3/16	1 3/16	1 3/16	1 3/16
16	1 3/8	1 5/16	1 5/16	1 5/16	1 5/16	1 3/16
17	1 1/2	1 7/16	1 7/16	1 5/16	1 7/16	1 5/16
20	1 5/8	1 9/16	1 7/16	1 7/16	1 7/16	1 7/16
21	1 3/4	1 9/16	1 9/16	1 9/16	1 9/16	1 9/16
22	1 7/8	1 11/16	1 11/16	1 11/16	1 11/16	1 11/16
23	2	1 13/16	1 13/16	1 13/16	1 13/16	1 13/16
24	2 1/8	1 15/16	1 15/16	1 15/16	1 15/16	1 13/16
25	2 1/4	2 1/16	2 1/16	2 1/16	2 1/16	1 15/16
26	2 3/8	2 3/16	2 3/16	2 3/16	2 3/16	2 1/16
27	2 1/2	2 5/16	2 5/16	2 5/16	2 5/16	2 3/16
30	2 5/8	2 7/16	2 7/16	2 7/16	2 7/16	2 5/16



CHAPTER 973 *Merchandise*



NEW!



Show your colours! EAA Chapter 973's **Merch Shop** offers a range of bright golf shirts, caps, hats and *now!* – a range of warm hoodies in different colours for those crisp upcoming winter mornings. Cash or cards accepted, come and visit us @ **Jack's**, we're open every Saturday morning for coffee, camaraderie and perhaps a breakfast at 26 South!



JOIN OUR CHAPTER!

Become part of our dynamic EAA Chapter! Chapter 973, based at one of Gauteng's best run and most friendly GA airfields, Jack Taylor, Krugersdorp, is open for membership. Our homebase, overlooking the runway, offers a warm and friendly place to hang out with fellow aviators and aviation enthusiasts.



JOIN HERE

MISSION 2.5

The Next Generation Is Ready to Fly – Are You?

Each year, 20 percent of our Young Eagles volunteer pilots retire. To keep this incredible program soaring, we need new pilots to step up and share the magic of flight. There will always be kids waiting for their first flight; all that's missing is you.

Join the greatest volunteer force in aviation and help inspire the next generation of aviators. EAA makes it easy to get started.

EAA.org/YEPilots

(Sport pilots and private pilots can fly!)

Fly 25 Young Eagles This Year and Make Your Mark on Mission 2.5

Pilots who fly 25 Young Eagles from October 1 to August 1, 2026, earn a limited-edition cap, courtesy of Sporty's.

Every flight changes a life, and together we can give 2.5 million kids the chance of a lifetime.



JIMMY GRAHAM
EAA YOUNG EAGLES CHAIRMAN



To learn more and be part of Mission 2.5, go to

EAA.org/Fly25YE



Chapter 973 Young Eagles Days 2026

- 13 June FAKR (International Young Eagles Day)

Pilots, planes, marshals and admin crew needed!



25th to 27th
SEPTEMBER

EAA's Annual Sun 'n Fun Aviation Festival

Join us
for a
weekend filled
with
flying, fun &
camaraderie!



- Catering
- Exhibitors
- Aircraft Judging
- Flying Competitions
- Camping on the airfield or BnB's nearby

Jack Taylor Airfield,
Krugersdorp
Friday 25 to Sunday 27
September 2026

