



Big Easy Wing



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September 19

Board Meeting -8:30

General Meeting -10 am

Volume 10 Issue 10

October 4 , 2026



Hello CAF Big Easy Wing Members,

I'm looking forward to some cooler weather in the coming months.

First up is this coming meeting and our Octoberfest Family Gathering. Kevin is going to show us how well he can cook sausage and hamburger, Saturday, October 10. Everyone is invited - friends and relatives or anybody you can scrape up off the street if you can just bring a side dish and something for you to drink because Kevin is going to be cooking some real treats for us.

It looks like our first permanent renter will be arriving October 8 or thereabouts. Anyone who rents from us will be required to join the CAF nationally and pay our Big Easy Wing dues. That is the requirement so that they will be covered by our insurance policy. The King Air was ready to come here but the inspection showed that the props needed to be overhauled so they were sent off to the factory and when it gets back and installed, I will let you know.

October 14 through the 18th I will be hosting the Quiet Birdman reunion in New Orleans so for that week I'm going to be hard to find but if I survive, I'll be back the following week. We have Stearman rides sold Wednesday, October 14 and Thursday hopefully next week we'll get more bookings for Stearman flights Friday and Saturday.

Kris has been training Andy and he's about ready to be cut loose and become an official Stearman Pilot. Keep working at it Andy so we can welcome you as a BEW Pilot



Contact Us-

info@bigeasywing.org



The Metairie Rotary club will be hosting a wine fundraiser in our hanger on Sunday, November 1. That's the Saints by week, from 3 to 6 PM. There will be a full bar, signature cocktails, heavy hors d'oeuvres, music and they will all get to look at our Stearman's. If you want to attend RSVP, call Dr. Guarisco at 504-400-7135.

Don't forget our Christmas party Saturday, December 4 from 5:30 to 8 PM. Make sure to show up otherwise Shirley might get stuck with a lot of presents she's trying to get rid of. There are always lots of door prizes.

Elections are creeping up on us and will be happening soon. See James article

Shirley attended the **Jennings Stearman Flyin**. See her photos below

See you Saturday!

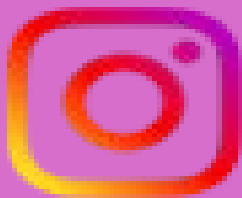




Big Easy Wing
8550 Lloyd Stearman
Dr. New Orleans, LA
70126

Next to FAA tower

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Assistant Safety Officer- Karl Shearer



Hello Big Easy Wing,

Halloween is in a few weeks, so if you or your family are going in costume for the festivities, please wear and dress your young ones in high visibility outfits. Masks are fun but can limit your vision and cause you to miss threats that might otherwise be obvious. Very scary.

October is also Protect Your Hearing month. As aviation aficionados, we can be subjected to extremely high decibel noises on a regular basis. Prolonged exposure can do long-term (lifelong) damage to your hearing. If you have worked on an air show in the past, you know exactly what I mean. High noise levels also cause fatigue. If you were ragged out after a day at the show, it might be (partly) the noise.

So, what's really happening with high decibel exposure?

The outer ear (the part you can see) directs sound waves to the middle ear and then to the cochlea, AKA the inner ear. The sound waves make the hair cells in the cochlea vibrate and stimulate the auditory nerve. The brain interprets these nerve impulses and allows us to understand speech or figure out which Mozart symphony we are hearing. Pretty amazing when you think about it. Prolonged elevated levels of exposure can damage your cochlear hair cells, and cause hearing loss.

While disease, certain medications, injuries to other ear structures and excess ear wax may also be to blame, the easiest way to prevent progressive hearing loss is by limiting excess decibel exposure. In short: hearing protection. Hearing loss is painless, progressive, permanent and (mostly) preventable. Plugs, muffs, or both are inexpensive and easy to use. They can cause some minor discomfort, but that's a small price to pay to save your hearing.

Untreated hearing loss can lead to problems with attention, memory and cognition resulting in feelings of isolation. Save what you've got. You're going to need it.

Practice safe behaviors - every minute, every day.



COMMEMORATIVE
AIR FORCE

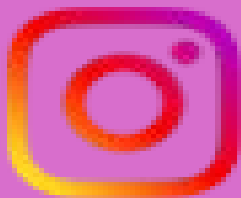
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Operation Officer Kris Caldwell



Greetings!

It sounded like the Big Easy Wing had a great event in Madison, MS. Thanks to everyone who helped!

N'awlins Lady has been flying a lot lately and she's doing great. We're very close to getting our newest pilot, Andy Wilson checked out and signed off. I flew twice this week with Andy, and we put lots of miles on Stearman. Check out some of the photos below. From grass fields to Stennis international airport to flights over Grand Isle, Andy has been getting his time in Stearman. If all goes well the next time he comes back from fighting fires, we will be finishing up on his required time. We are hoping that he will be flying the plane to the NAS Pensacola Blue Angels Homecoming Airshow (Nov 6-7) week and Mike is overseas.





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info@bigeasywing.org



Educational Officer Roger Jeffrey



Hello members!



Five Scouts from Troop 64 attended our Aviation Merit Badge course on September 26th. This group enjoyed their visit to the Fire Station and the FAA Control Tower. They were very engaged in the flight simulator portion of the class, especially on our newest upgraded X-Plane 12 simulator.

Our next Aviation Merit Badge class will be another group of Scouts from Troop 230 and is scheduled for October 17th. We will also host a hangar visit and tour from a Cub Scout Pack from Belle Chasse on November 7th.

So long for now!



Troop 64 Scouts
and our instructors



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Membership – Shirley Colomb



Hello Membership,

Let's give a big welcome to our 2 new members: Zachary Munger and Ralph Cangelosi. They were introduced at our September 19th meeting by their friends who recently joined. Please show him a big easy wing welcome this month.

All members need to be using KASTRACK, (<https://cafbew.kastrack.com/people/users>) This program is an electronic filing system. It contains many of our documents. Please log in and view some of our history. Each person needs to put in their updated CAF membership card #. Officers needs to include any documents that they have developed.

Also, a good place to visit is our website: www.bigeasywing.org, our FB and Instagram. All of these places can give you an overview of our unit's accomplishments.

BEW Family Gathering – Celebrating Oktoberfest – Kevin Duxworth

Hi Everyone,

It is the time of the year to enjoy the outdoors and the camaraderie of the membership. So, please come to the meeting, stay for lunch, and bring the kids. We will have games set up for both the young and the old so make it a date.

I will be cooking up some burgers and bratwurst. Please bring a dish or something for the table would be great. I know Shirley is getting large pretzels and beer cheese sauce.

I don't want anyone to go hungry so please send me a text by October 8 that lets me know the number of people joining us on the 10th of October.

There will be no charge for the meal.



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Adjutant – Shirley Colomb



Welcome to October and all the events that occur with the enjoyable weather!

The **Jennings Stearman** event. Scheduled for **September 30th through Oct 4** was wonderful.

So far, we have sold 5 rides to conventioners attending the Quiet Birdman convention.

Don't forget that Stennis Halloween event at the Stennis International Airport on Saturday October 25 and our Stearman will be flying. We hope to have many rides.

Pensacola Blue Angel Show on Nov 6-7. I have heard back from them and we are completing the next set of required paperwork. Kris has been busy working with Andy getting him ready for CAF pilot certification so that he will be able to fly the plane to Pensacola. Keep your fingers croseed.

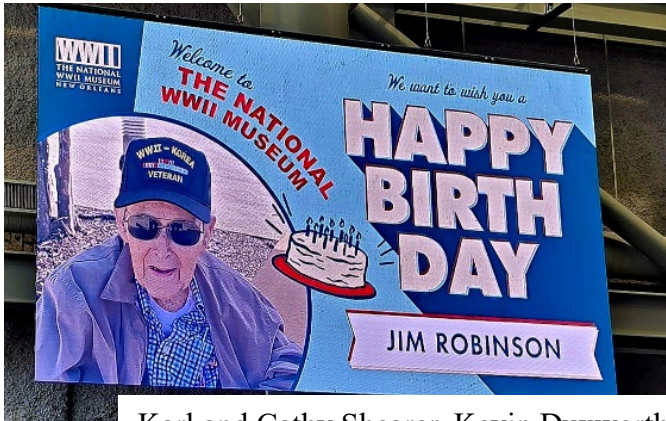
November 14 is our next meeting and election of officers.

I would like us to celebrate Veterans Day and have a flight day. Check among your friends and see if anyone would like to fly.

Andy will hopefully be finished putting out fires and indicated he will be in attendance. Andy will do a presentation on his career as a fire bomber so mark your calendar to hear some interesting stories and visuals.



105 years young



We met Jim when he participated in the Flight of the Flags held on July 11th, 2026.

Karl and Cathy Shearer, Kevin Duxworth, Shirley Colomb and Donald Clausing went to the WW2 birthday party. We presented Jim with a proclamation and a BEW challenge coin. Then we toured the Road to Tokyo.

As seen on **Fox 8 News**



Election – Jmes Mykris

It is election time again. The following positions are available for anyone interested in serving as an Executive, Adjutant, Maintenance, and Education.

The official resources for understanding the rights and responsibilities of all unit positions can be found using the CAF HQ website. Simply log in by entering your email address and your last name (no caps) as your password. Another practical approach would be to use the next membership meeting on October 10, 2026, to ask around about it in person. You'll be able to find out what it's really like and perhaps discover how best you can support the wing.

I will need to submit a slate of nominees to CAF-HQ prior to our November election so if you are interested in running for any of the above positions, then please send me an email prior to our general membership meeting on November 14, 2026, at the following address: jamesmykris@gmail.com.

Nominees will be announced at the October meeting. Elections will be held during the November meeting. Installation will take place at the BEW Christmas Social in December. Your nomination committee consists of me, James Mykris, and Tom Slack. You can contact either of us if you have any questions. Thanks so much.

October 2026

- 10.10 BD/general meeting (nominees for board)
- 10.10 **Octoberfest BEW Family Gathering -11 am**
- 10.14-17 Quiet Birdman Flight Days -Kris pilot afternoons
Loadmasters needed -Dom Karl Kevin Peyton
- 10.24 Stennis Airport Halloween flight Jared pilot
Loadmaster needed – Dom? / Karl? /Peyton?

November 2026

- 11.1 Rotary Wine Social - Alex Rafferty
(Shirley/Bill/Harold)
- 11.7 Club Scout tour of hangar – Roger
- 11.5-8 Pensacola Show – Pilot Kris? Andy?
LM – Karl /Kevin Sells – Shirley/Glenn/Dawn/Duck
- 11.14 BD/general meeting – elections
Veterans Fight Day?

December 2026

- 12.4 Christmas Social- 5:30pm



Antonov An-2 *The Fat Cat*

First Impressions: It is widely known that the Antonov Company is famous for its production of large airplanes, such as the 1,410,000 pound, six-engine An-225 *Mriya* (*may she rest in peace*). Although the An-2 is a single engine biplane (NATO callsign “*Colt*”), this “baby” Antonov is massive! The 12,000-pound max gross weight makes it the world’s largest production single engine biplane.

History: Oleg Antonov was a Russian aircraft designer who was, at one time, the lead design engineer for the Yakovlev Design Bureau. During WWII, he designed both the successful A-7 troop-carrying glider and the fanciful, but unsuccessful, A-40 tank glider (a T-60 light tank with discardable wood and fabric wings and tail). From 1943 to the end of the war, he primarily worked on the Yak-3 fighter series. His success within Yakovlev led him to receive his own design bureau, named (with true Soviet imagination) “*Light Aircraft Forming Bureau 153*”. More commonly, it became known as the *Antonov Design Bureau* and was eventually moved to Kyiv, Ukraine.

The USSR, being a vast nation, needed a rugged utility aircraft to provide access to its many extremely remote locations. The first assignment of the newly formed Antonov Design Bureau was for a light utility aircraft intended for forestry and agricultural purposes. The result was a design so utilitarian, it remained in production for 54 years! The slow, but sturdy airplane was, and still is, used as an airliner, cropduster, paratrooper plane, air ambulance, floatplane, skiplane, fire bomber, and more. Its STOL performance with huge load-capacity and easy-to-fly characteristics strongly contributed to its longevity, making it the “*Kalashnikov*” of airplanes.

Todd Schultz, corporate pilot and owner of the *Golden Age Flight Museum* in Bakersfield, California, acquired his 1977 An-2 in 2020. He affectionately calls his beast “*The Fat Cat*”. One of the strangest aircraft modifications I have seen is the 12 air-powered train horns mounted on the belly of his gigantic Antonov. When I asked why, Todd answered, “Why not?” Because the plane is certified in the U.S. as *Experimental Exhibition*, it can’t be used for any commercial purposes. And frankly, what’s more American than taking a former Soviet aircraft and installing an air compressor and 12 train horns? As you might guess, it sounds like a flying freight train!



Design Characteristics: If ever a plane was built for self-sustaining utility, the An-2 was it. The places in which it was designed to operate were often hundreds of miles from any support, so the designers included some ingenious and practical features to negate the need for support equipment. A few examples are: (1) air hoses located behind panels in the nose and tail to refill the tires with compressed air from the accumulator; (2) an electric pump in the bottom of the cowling to allow a hose to siphon fuel from a drum positioned beneath the nose; (3) a quick-drain oil reservoir method (engine oil can be drained at the end of a flight, heated over a stove in the morning and poured back in the reservoir when ready for the next day's flight in sub-zero Siberian winters).

One of the most incredible (but unverified) features of the *Colt* involves the threaded “nubs” at the tip of the top wings (which have a longer wingspan than the lower wings). Should an An-2 need an engine replacement far from any support, a spare engine can be loaded in another An-2 and flown to the rescue. An eyebolt is threaded into the nub and a block and tackle is attached and used to hoist the spare engine out of the other An-2. Then by maneuvering and repositioning the two airplanes, the engines can be swapped without the use of an engine hoist!

Powerplant: The wooden four-bladed, constant speed prop diameter measures in at just under 12 feet. Behind this massive prop is a 9-cylinder, supercharged *Shvetsov* PZL ASz-62 radial engine. This engine is a licensed Polish-built copy of the Russian ASh-62, which is an upgraded *Shvetsov* M-25, which, in turn, is a Soviet license-built copy of the Wright R-1820-F3 *Cyclone*. More simply put, it's a Russian-built R-1820, boosted from 720 to 1000-horsepower. Each upper wing has three tanks that supply a total of 320 gallons of fuel. At takeoff power, “*The Fat Cat*” drinks 110 gallons per hour with cruise power consumption being about 43 gph.

Start/Taxi/Takeoff: If you have a recently-imported An-2, make sure to translate everything to English. Not everything is intuitive. On the mixture control lever, aft is rich and forward is lean. Also, full lean will not kill the engine. There is a separate lever on the panel to completely shut off fuel to the engine. The magneto lever is turned all the way left to select “both”. When ready to start, open the air pressure valve located behind the pilot's left elbow, and then prime the cylinders and manifold with ten shots of prime and ten pump actuations with the fuel wobble pump. Toggle the inertial starter switch left to “electric engage”. After hearing the high-pitched inertial starter stabilize at max rpm, toggle the switch right to “auto engage.” If the “auto engage” doesn't work, you can manually pull a T-handle to engage the clutch. The huge four-bladed prop will rapidly engage and, hopefully, start coughing and belching. If not, repeat the process until successful.



After starting, there is a whole series of switches, valves, levers and cranks to set before taxi. Taxiing “*The Fat Cat*” requires the use of a yoke-mounted lever that actuates the pneumatic brake on the side where the rudder pedal is depressed. The tailwheel is free-castoring. The giant Antonov will lurch, hiss, groan and growl as “the beastmaster” (aka pilot) does their best to cajole the behemoth toward the runway. As unwieldy as it is on the ground, 770 square feet of wing area greatly reduces the coaxing required to get this *Fat Cat* to fly. With no cargo or passengers on board, it will be airborne in under 300 feet of ground roll.

Flight Characteristics: 12,000 pounds of drag is a lot of mass to move around without assisted flight controls. While it is simple to fly, this plane does take some muscle, especially in turbulence. It flies like a dump truck with wings, which, essentially, it is. Rolling the An-2 into a turn is best accomplished with both hands on the W-shaped control yokes. All four wings have pushrod-controlled flaps and ailerons that droop with the flaps. Whether cruising at a blistering 90-mph or in slow flight at 44-mph with full flaps, aileron droop and leading-edge slats deployed, the roll control forces are about the same - heavy. Elevator control is comparatively light. I imagine that An-2 crop duster pilots must have huge shoulder and quad muscles from yanking and banking their machine all day.



An interesting note in the Emergency Procedures portion of the pilot’s manual is the recommendation to deploy full flaps, turn into the wind, and hold the yoke full back if experiencing an engine failure at night or in IMC with unknown terrain below. The An-2 will touch down at a “parachute descent rate”, which offers a very survivable option in a bad situation.

Landing: Flaps are deployed with a thumb button on the throttle and are retracted with another button on the console aft of the throttle. Carb heat is applied by moving a lever forward. As you slow to around 58-mph, you’ll feel a “bang”. Don’t be alarmed. This sound is created as the full-span leading edge slats deploy on the top wings. The lumbering beast is quite stable on approach. The pilot’s eye height is about 13 feet above ground, so remember to flare early. The oleo-strut gear was made to absorb some austere landing strips, so even ugly landings are forgiven. Because the An-2 has no toe brakes, if a little braking is needed during landing rollout, squeeze the air brake handle on the yoke to send compressed air to the side on which the rudder pedal is applied. Like everything else in aviation, practice produces good muscle memory.

Wrap-Up: Love it or hate it, the An-2 is one of the most successful aircraft ever manufactured. More than 18,000 were built in Russia, China and Poland between 1947 and 2001, and this run is even more impressive when considering it is a radial-engine biplane with fabric wings still used in a modern era. There is little doubt that gainfully employed An-2s will still be chugging along at 100 years old. So, the next time you hear a freight train flying above, look up and tip your hat at “*The Fat Cat*”!

