



EAA 485

January 2026—Panhandle Pelicans



new year,
new opportunities



It is never too soon to start planning for EAA AirVenture 2026! Check out the President's Notes for helpful details.

Pensacola beach

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

Okay, we've been in hibernation for two months. It's time to get back in action! Not much going on in aviation, right? WRONG! Come to the January meeting to catch up!

The January 10th meeting will include passing out certificates and pins from EAA, to partially thank everyone who participated in 2025 chapter activities. And my personal favorite part will be announcing the 2025 chapter MVP. I don't even know where to start! The guest speaker will be Sean Londrigan's dad, Sean Londrigan, Sr. Sean is a retired USAF test pilot, who will talk to us about his work on V-22 Osprey testing.

MOSAIC: If you are interested in another brief summary of the new Light Sport Pilot/ Aircraft rules, check out this new fact sheet from the FAA FAAST team: [faa.gov/newsroom/modernization-special-airworthiness-certification-mosaic-fact-sheet](https://www.faa.gov/newsroom/modernization-special-airworthiness-certification-mosaic-fact-sheet)

Early Air Venture Planning: Going to Air Venture should be a bucket list item for anybody interested in aviation! It is EAA's showcase of all things aviation, conducted for a week at Oshkosh, WI airport (KOSH) every summer. This year it occurs July 20-26th. Attending Air Venture is NOT something you want to plan last minute! A good starting point for planning information is eaa.org>AIRVENTURE. I sent out the information recently about the UW-Oshkosh dorm room reservations opening up. At each meeting this spring, we'll try to offer a few minutes of Air Venture planning tips. Talk to those who have been there.

Clubhouse update: A bundle of new metal roofing has been sitting in front of the clubhouse for a couple months now. It should be installed soon. Once the roof is complete, we can work on rainwater remediation in the back room, painting, etc.

Hope to see you at our Jan. 10th meeting!

Ralph

Possible 2026 Guest Speakers

Aviation Insurance Agent

Retired SR-71 Pilot

Sean Londrigan, Sr, USAF V-22 Osprey Development

Briefing

AOPA Airport Reps for PNS and/or JKA

Kevin Kropp, PSC Student Services Advisor, Aviation Mechanics

Dr. Scott Rossow, DO, DABR, CFII, FAA Deputy Regional Flight Surgeon,
Central Region

Possible 2026 Field Trips

Kevin Kropp, ST Engineering at PNS

AIRBUS at BFM

Continental Motors aircraft engine factory Mobile

Museum of Naval Aviation

YOUNG EAGLES UPDATE

We closed out 2025 with three incredibly successful rallies and several one-off flights, totaling about 90 Young Eagles flights. Thank you to all who participated in any way connected to providing these flights. Your time means more to our local teens than many of us probably realize. Moving into 2026, I look forward to not only serving as many young eagles as we can, but also finding ways to make it as easy on our pilots as possible. I have some things in mind that I hope to put into action shortly, but if you have any other ideas, feel free to let me know. YE pilots, please make sure your Youth Protection and Background are current. If there are any pilots that have not flown Young Eagles and would like to get involved, please don't hesitate to contact me over phone, text, email, or all three. I would love to help you get set up and ready to go for the next rally. If you are not a pilot, but would still like to get involved, let me know! There are plenty of ways we could use your help, especially at the rallies.

See you all on the 10th!

—Sean Londrigan

DRANO'S ZENITH 750 UPDATE

Happy New Year! The progress on my Zenith has been generally slow but steady with some major interruptions for holiday celebrations with family and friends. The progress since the last report includes installing upper hinges for the doors, rerouting the fuel lines since what I had planned did not work, wiring in lights & strobes, and over thinking wing root fairings.

You may recall that I saw this challenge coming some time ago and discussed various approaches in an update. The gap, as you see pictured top right, requiring fairings in this project is significant. You are looking at the forward wing mount on the left wing and the 1 & 3/4-inch gap between the wing root and the fuselage. Options to cover this gap include making aluminum fairings, heavy plastic fairings, or build up fiberglass fairings. These are compound curves and bends, so I decided to tackle the challenge in aluminum first with the next option available if it did not work. I got a role of painter's tape and started covering the gap where I wanted the fairing to go. I put on several layers till I had a flimsy "cast like" structure when I peeled it off.

I adjusted this cardboard pattern several times till the cardboard would tape into place the way I wanted it to lay over the gap.

My next step was to lay the painters tape "cast" directly on my bran flakes cereal box cardboard for the basic outline.



My next step was to transfer the cardboard pattern directly onto .002 aluminum and start bending it to fit.



And here is how it looks after all of that.



So far so good. I plan to add a rubber edge strip and some anti-chafing material to the fairing and still have to install the nut plates to fasten it to the top and bottom wing root fairings to hold it in place. I think this will work. I also think this is the year this puppy will fly but I will keep you informed!

Drano

RAY AVIATION SCHOLARSHIP

Lily Bannon is steadily continuing her training. She finishing up her flight requirements and is preparing for her check ride. The short days this time of year and school schedule limit her ability to fly during the work week.

2026 Ray Scholarship Program

We are expecting to formally be awarded 2 scholarships at any time. This will open up the application window through February 15, 2026. Tentatively interviews will be the first weekend in March with the selected candidates announced at the March meeting. This timeline should allow the selected candidates start their covered training by mid-April.

The 2026 Ray Aviation Scholarship instruction letter and Local Application Instructions will be posted to our EAA 485 website.

—Scott Swanson

2026 Chapter Dues:

Now is the best time to pay your chapter dues for 2026! If you are unsure if you have any, please check with [Kaydee](#) and she will let you know.

—Kaydee

Secretary's Notes: Nov 8, 2025

VMC: night emergency practice

IMC: partial power approach

10:00 meeting

Officer Reports

Nov 1 Young Eagles Rally was successful

Girls in Aviation postponed to Jan 31

Chapter Elections

On Nov 8, 2025 Joseph Buis motioned to keep all our current officers in their respective positions and Donna Barker seconded the motion. The vote was a unanimous yes.

Capt. Bill Miles' 99th birthday was celebrated Nov 11, 2025

—Jacob

Why are spatial disorientation accidents on the rise?

JOHN ZIMMERMAN

AIR FACTS JOURNAL

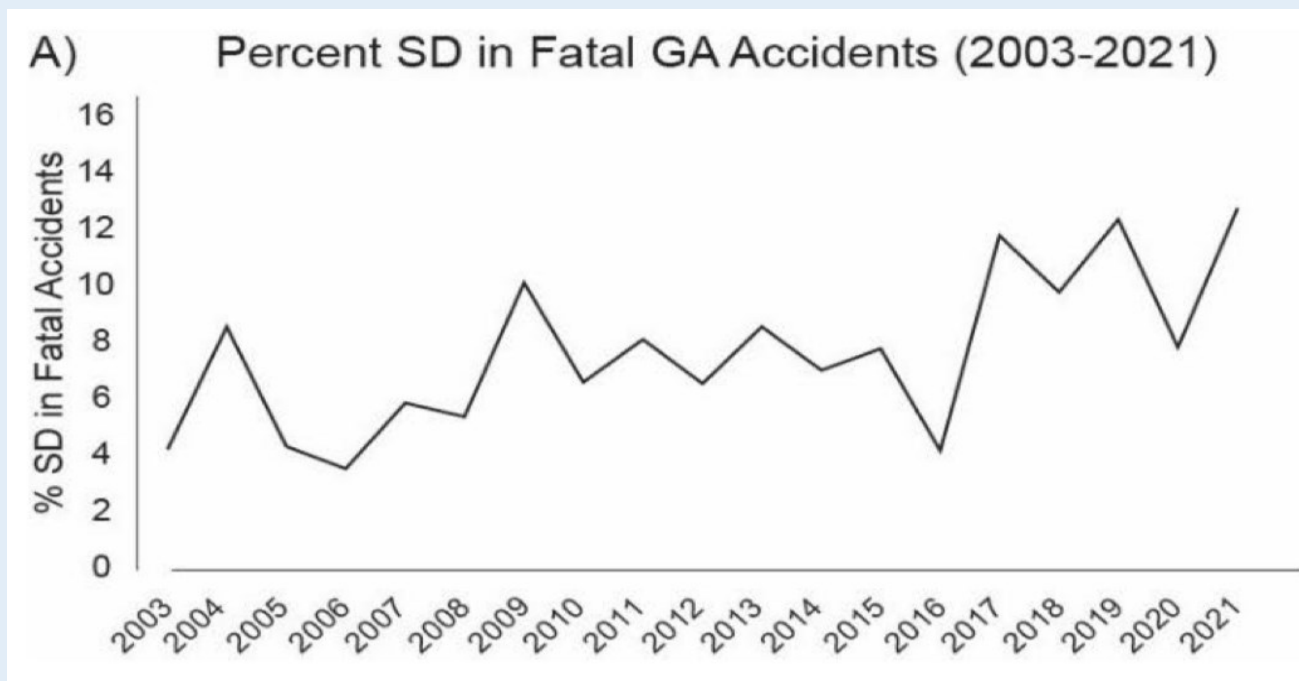
SEPTEMBER 8, 2025

Spatial disorientation kills. All pilots know this intuitively, but the statistics back up the gut feel: 94% of fixed-wing general aviation accidents involving SD are fatal, a shocking number that hasn't changed much over the last four decades. So while these accidents make up a small percent of total accidents (see [this article](#) for the details), they still make up a significant share of all fatalities.

If those numbers don't surprise you, this [fascinating study](#) from earlier this year should.

More tech, more accidents?

First, the researchers from the FAA show that SD accidents have not declined since 2003—in fact, quite the opposite. You might assume the widespread adoption of tools like datalink weather, modern autopilots, reliable AHRS, and electronic flight bag apps would make VFR-into-IMC (the classic SD accident scenario) much less common. It's easier than ever to know where the bad weather is, and our avionics are more reliable than in the days of vacuum pumps and ADFs. It's a great theory, but the numbers don't support it:



Again, though, for anyone paying attention to FBO ramps lately this makes sense. Single engine turboprops and light jets are booming, while high performance pistons are stagnant. The result is the doctor in a Bonanza 50 years ago is more likely to be a business owner in a TBM these days. Such airplanes are incredibly capable, but they are also high performance machines that can quickly get away from the pilot if they lack proficiency.

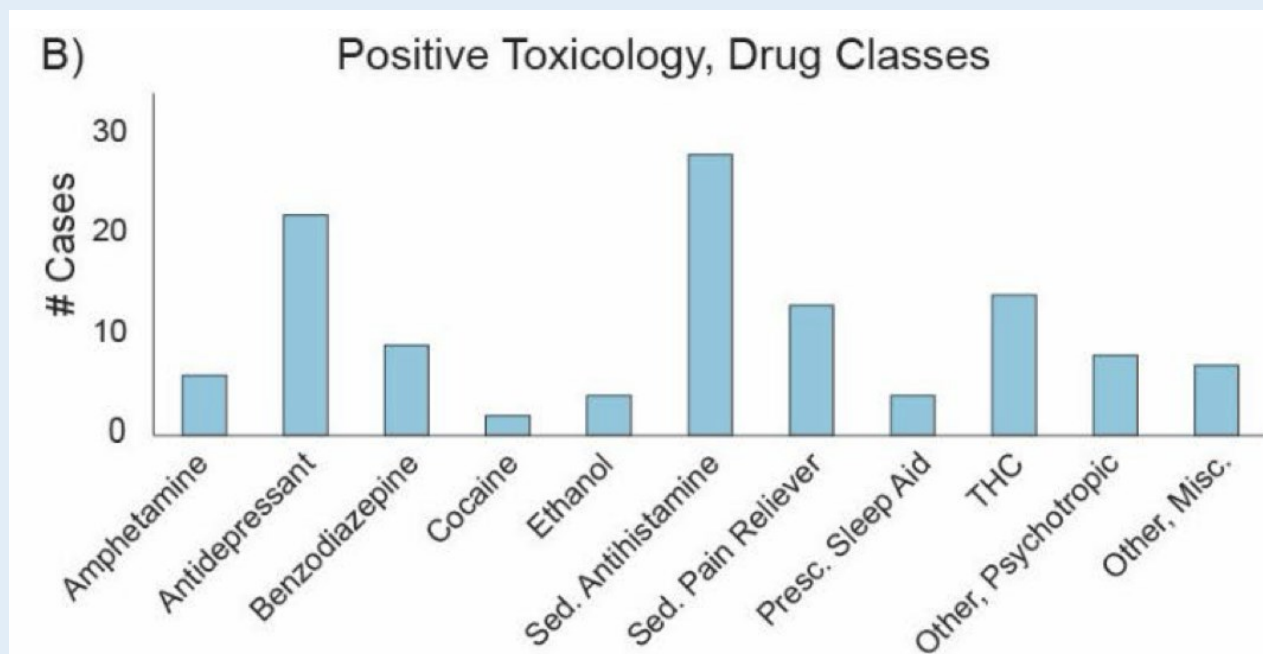
An unexpected cause

To review: against a backdrop of falling accident rates, spatial disorientation accidents have risen, and these accidents typically involve older and less experienced pilots, sometimes flying turbine airplanes.

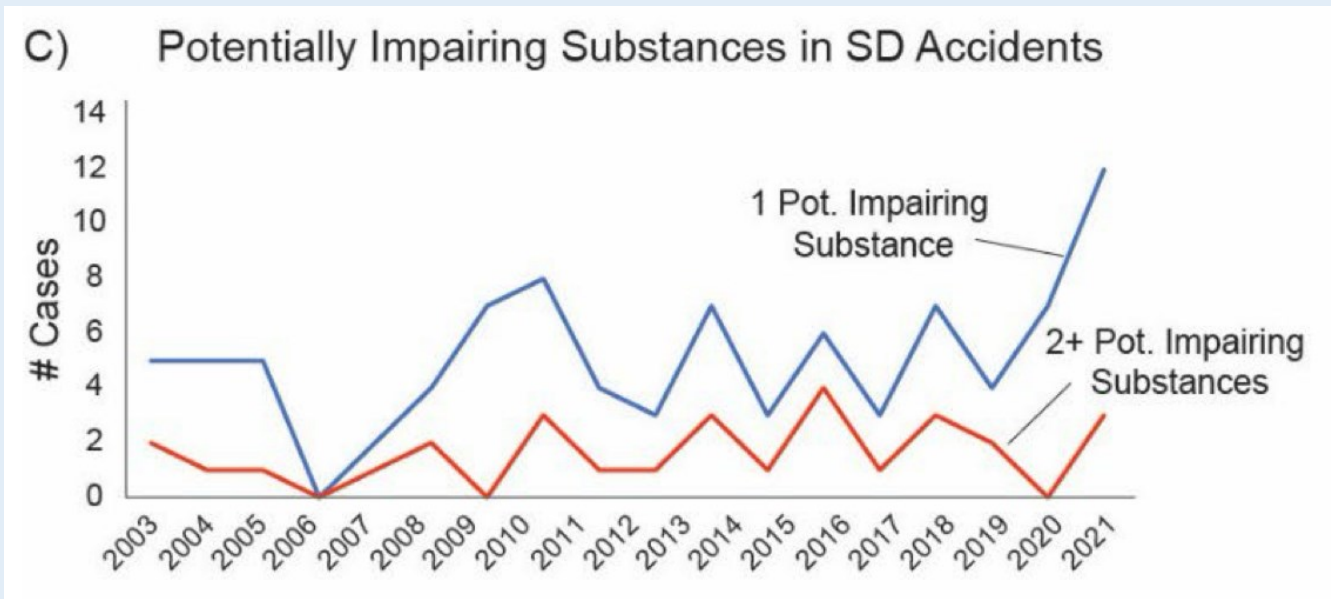
Unfortunately, that's not the end of the story.

The FAA report also points out the uncomfortable reality that “potentially impairing substances” show up in an increasing number of NTSB reports. In fact, over the 2003-2021 timeframe, “A total of 90 out of 367 (24.5%) fatal pilots had a positive toxicology result.” That one quarter of accident pilots were potentially impaired seems incredibly high, and not something we should sweep under the rug.

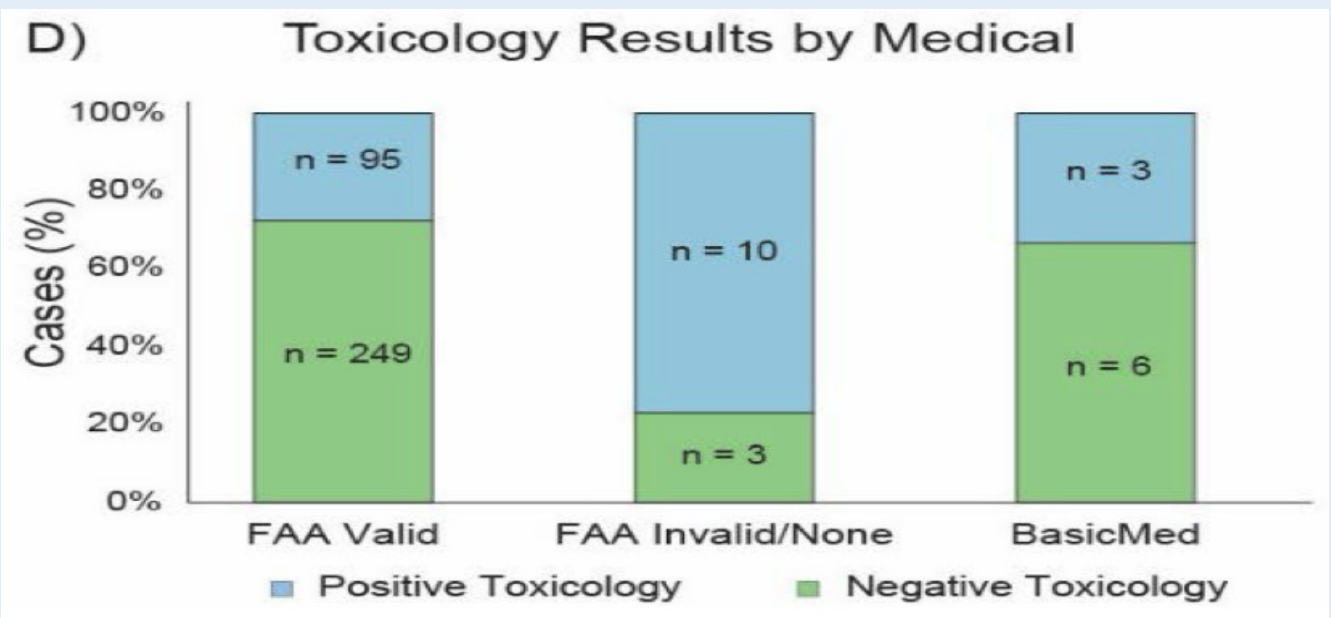
These positive toxicology results were almost all drugs, as alcohol was a rare finding. What drugs were these pilots taking? Mostly cold medicine, but antidepressants are a close second, and even THC is creeping up:



Obviously, taking a Benadryl does not lead directly to a fatal accident. But it also does not help a pilot who may be dealing with bad weather or a lack of avionics proficiency. Even worse, the report goes on to explain that “27 accidents included positive toxicology findings for two or more potentially impairing substances... 14 pilots tested positive for an illicit substance.”



Some of these pilots are probably just rule-breakers by nature. Notice in the graph below that 77% of accident pilots who did not have a valid FAA medical tested positive for toxicology. That suggests these pilots knew they weren't 100% healthy, and chose to fly anyway. It's doubtful that a better flight review or a new regulation would change these pilots' behavior. Even excluding those pilots, though, 28% of pilots with a valid FAA medical tested positive.



What to do

I'm not suggesting pilots cancel every flight when they have a sniffle, or that they resort to a caveman lifestyle and forswear all medications. I have flown with a cold and lived to tell the story, like most pilots. But these results should give us pause. Drugs clearly have an under-appreciated role in SD accidents, and that's something that is completely under our control.

The FAA actually has a [very helpful resource](#) that explains what types of medication can be used by pilots. It's worth reviewing as we prepare for cold and flu season, because a few minor adjustments can keep you reasonably healthy and perfectly legal. For example, if you have to fly then choose Allegra over Benadryl, Afrin over NyQuil, and Tylenol over Tylenol PM. If you're taking serious medication like narcotic pain-killers, an honest discussion with your AME is in order.

If you are going to fly when you're a little under the weather, try to stack the odds in your favor. Fly during the day (the statistics on SD accidents at night are terrible), have a good autopilot (know how to use it!), and consider taking another pilot along (who has been briefed on their role). Remember that Mother Nature does not care about your sinus infection or your bad back.

As sad as the statistics are about drugs, this is not the whole story—after all, 75% of SD accidents did *not* involve drugs. Also, SD does not necessarily mean VFR-into-IMC. While that is still the most common accident in this category, it accounts for less than 50% of fatal SD accidents. So even if you never take medication, there is plenty of work to do on basic instrument flying skills, avionics proficiency, and weather interpretation.

The NTSB data has been clear for many decades: the pilot in the left seat is the weakest link on a typical GA flight. This is not a reason to quit, it's a reason to bring our best every time we fly. That means being healthy, unimpaired by drugs, well rested, and most of all proficient. The stakes are high, but so are the rewards.



Homebuilders Week

January 26–30, 2026

EAA and Local Chapter Sites

[EAA 485](#)

[EAA 1265](#)

[EAA HDQTRS](#)

[EAA 108](#)

[EAA 416](#)

[Interesting Links](#)

[Making the First Airbus 220 Time Lapse](#)

[Jetman Unleashed in Dubai](#)

[Boeing 737 Time Lapse Build](#)

[F-18 Low Level](#)

[High Speed Carrier Maneuvering](#)

[Miscellaneous](#)

[1800wxbrief.com](#)

[FAA Notams](#)

[Barnstormers](#)

[Skyvector.com](#) Flight Planning, Charts

[AirNav.com](#) Airport info, Fuel Prices

Normally meetings will be held at [Roscoe Field Airport \(82J\)](#) (Uni 122.8) on the **Second Saturday** of each month at 10:00 AM unless otherwise posted.

If flying in, check NAS Pensacola (KNPA) NOTAMS for possible TFRs and the [Roscoe Field Airport website](#) under the Arrivals tab for important arrival and departure information.

Driving: From Hwy 98 turn south on Aileron Avenue and enter at the main airport entrance. Turn right at the dumpsters and follow the single-lane paved road. Just short of the blue aircraft hangars, turn left. Our white clubhouse is at the end on the left. If the main airport entrance gate is locked, continue south on Aileron Avenue to the end and turn left into the back gate. Open and close the gate behind you. Make a right once past the blue hangars. You'll see our white clubhouse at the end on the left.

For more info contact:

[Ralph Moser](#) (847) 736-4603.

2026 Officers and Committee Chairmen

President: [Ralph Moser](#)
(847) 736-4603

Vice President: [Mark Rogers](#)

Tech Counselor/Flight Advisor: (251) 228-0356

Secretary: [Jacob Abston](#)
(251)424-5004

Treasurer/Membership: [Kaydee MacDonald](#)

Ray Scholarship Coordinator: [Scott Swanson](#)
(309)-267-9710

Young Eagles Coordinator: Sean Londrigan
(217) 503-3534

Webmaster: [Doug Francisco](#)
(850) 453-5501

VMC Club / [Donna and DeWitt Barker](#)

IMC Club (850) 572-0288

Newsletter Editor: Courtney Wielander
(305) 917-5557

Tech Counselor [John McKiernan](#)
Flight Advisor (850) 291-4134

Thatcher CX4 Build





Home Of The
PANHANDLE PELICANS

EAA 485 Pensacola, FL

Upcoming Events

(CHAPTER EVENTS IN CAPS):

January 10th, MONTHLY CHAPTER
MEETINGS + Guest Speaker

February 14th, MONTHLY CHAPTER
MEETINGS – Program TBA

March 14th, MONTHLY CHAPTER
MEETINGS – Program TBA

April 11TH, MONTHLY CHAPTER
MEETINGS – Program TBA

April, Date TBA, SPRING YOUNG EAGLES
RALLY

April 14-19, Sun ‘n Fun Aerospace Expo,
Lakeland, FL

July 20-26th, Air Venture, Oshkosh, WI

Next chapter meeting is:

Saturday, January 10th, 2025

0830-0930, VMC/IMC Club Meeting.

1000-1100, General Membership Meeting:

Pledge

Guests

Officers Reports: President, Vice-President,
Secretary, Treasurer/Membership

Ray Scholarship – Scott Swanson

Young Eagles – Sean Londrigan

Member Build Projects Update

Guest Speaker – Sean Londrigan Sr, Lt.
Col. USAF (RET) – USAF V-22 Osprey
Development

Lunch after meeting - Cheeseburgers/
Chips/Cookies/Soft Drinks - \$5 donation
requested

8/3/86

