

MEMBER OF THE MONTH

Charles Gregory Connell made his debut into this great world of ours on May 1, 1966. The locale was the “old” University Hospital, and proud first-time parents were Charlie & Jackie Connell. While considered a bona fide local, his interests and activities have been and are broad to the extent that he hasn’t missed out on much!

Greg’s aviation interests began at the early age of 4 years, as he followed his dad to local airports and spent much time with him at the home of EAA172 Father Al Patton. There he watched airplanes landing and taking off and the construction of flying machines (i.e., Thorpe, S1 PITTS). His interests wavered a bit after entering elementary school. He began playing guitar in the first grade, and the next couple years would lead him into motorcycle racing (as a participant, mind you, versus a spectator!). By the time he reached high school, he was ready to try his hand (and arms, legs, feet, etc.) in the sports of football and golf. After graduating from North Augusta High School, he continued his education at Spartanburg Methodist College and the University of South Carolina (go GAMECOCKS!), where he graduated with a degree in finance.

While attending school, he worked part time (waiting tables, playing in bands, etc.) to pay for his extra-curricular activities. Having a college degree in hand meant it was time to become completely self-supporting, so - “World, here I come!” He began his career as an insurance agent, then worked for TV Station Channel 12. Ultimately he and his father would open up a heating, air-conditioning and appliance repair business, which Greg currently runs and operates with several technicians.

After much of Dad’s prodding to return his interest to aviation, Greg accepted tutelage from Al Patton in Ben Covington’s Piper Pacer. He received his pilot’s license in 1990 and now holds ratings for commercial, multi-engine, instrument, with an FAA aerobatic waiver. Consequently, where he much admired Pop’s barrels, rolls, etc. in aircraft, HE has far exceeded those maneuverability skills! Greg has performed his aerobatic feats in 20+ air shows, including three at Boshears Skyfests. He currently owns an RV10, PITTS S2B, and an “APF in progress”.



When Greg is not running Connell’s HVAC & Appliance Repair, he spends time in his Twin Lakes hangar/home, dealing with real estate, in the air, or practicing/playing with his Free Beer Band. He shares his lovely home with wife Ginger (who is extremely supportive of her husband), stepson Justin, and pets Kalimba, Fred, Piper & Dakota. Other family members include Mom Jackie, sister Karyn, step-sister Kimberly, brothers-in-law Paul & John, nieces Makenzie & Kayla, nephews Tanner & Dylan, and, of course, Pop Charlie and #2 Mom Sheila!

Greg’s contributions to EAA172 include HVAC installation at cost, donation of materials and labor to support the system, acquisition and preparation of our Valentine’s Day meeting meal, representing our chapter in performance of his aerobatic stunts! Greg also has extensively supported your chapter president in promoting and securing membership to our club and featured interesting articles for our newsletter.

Two thoughts Greg would like to leave with our readers are: (1) He credits his father with his aviator skills and believes Pop deserves this honor much more than he. (2) He wishes to see more young folks involved with what he has had the GREAT opportunity to experience - being around and learning from Aviation Greats such as Moe Waldrop, Charlie Davis, Gary Ward, Al Patton, Phil Colman, Ben Covington, and Joe Miles!