

EAA *Sport Aviation*

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THE BEST OF

OSHKOSH



Family Safari

The Svenningsens and their award-winning helicopter

Success Stories

SportAir Workshops help build builders

High-Flying High School

Meet the students and staff of the West Michigan Aviation Academy



Taking a moment to look back

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Love Takes Flight

California Carbon Cub EX-2

THE STORY BEGINS IN 2015 when Tobias Burch, EAA 1210089, went to Alaska and fell in love with bush flying. When he received a four-year job assignment relocating him from Lucerne, Switzerland, to San Diego, he considered it a perfect opportunity to realize his dream of building an airplane. He chose the CubCrafters Carbon Cub EX-2, the ultimate bush flying machine.

In July 2016, his first delivery to his new house in San Diego was the crate containing the wing kit, fuselage kit, firewall forward, engine, and avionics. While still working on the first wing, he met Jackie, who was intrigued to learn he was building an airplane in his garage. Being a civil engineer and mechanically inclined, she jumped at the opportunity to help.

After working together on the airplane a couple of times and after a few more dates, the seed was planted and he fell in love. However, Jackie had plans to travel for a year, during which Tobias spent another 1,500 hours completing the fuselage assembly, boot cowl, panel/avionics installation, covering, and painting. When she returned, he asked her to move in. There was only one problem: The airplane was still in his garage.

As she again became involved in the build, one of her first assignments was to search for parts — all those little nuts and bolts that have specific part numbers — and she soon learned it was a time-consuming part of building an airplane. The next step was to install the engine and landing gear so they could move it to a hangar. They worked together effortlessly. She'd read the manual out loud and

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give him a hand when needed. In four days, the airplane was ready for the 20-mile journey to the hangar.

On the big day, Tobias rented a 26-foot truck and arranged for a few friends to help load and unload. With a temporary ramp using two 2-by-12-foot boards and two sawhorses at the midspan, the fuselage was easily loaded into and out of the truck. Once safely in the hangar, the final assembly began.



Starting with the tail feather installation, they worked side by side every day. He learned the value of having a capable partner and thought of naming the airplane *Jackie*. She said, “No way! Who is going to be Jackie 1 and Jackie 2, me or the airplane?” Eventually, the name *Pocahontas* arose and stuck.

Next came the vortex generator installation, which was a challenge, as was installing the wings. Once Tobias bought aluminum rods to streamline installation, as suggested in the manual, the wings were aligned and the bolts were ready for torquing.

Then came the wing rigging; instrument panel painting; installation of the jury struts, pitot tube, windscreen, windows, skylight, wing root, flaps, and ailerons; and all of the cable installations and rigging, which included burning holes in the fabric. Every step was completed as a team — acquiring the right tools, talking through the process, negotiating differences, and falling in love.

Finally, it was time to start fitting the engine cowl. It was a time-consuming process to get it to fit perfectly to Tobias’ Swiss standards. After trimming, sanding, drilling, and riveting, it was ready for paint. With the propeller and engine cowl installed, *Pocahontas* was ready for final weight, weighing in at 1,025 pounds.

After completing the build logs, *Pocahontas* was ready for its first engine start on June 8, 2019. It was a success, and EAA AirVenture Oshkosh 2019 seemed possible. With six weeks to go, the instrumentation had to be finalized, designated airworthiness representative organized, and high-speed taxi test, first flight, and 40 hours of Phase I flight testing completed.

On July 12, 2019, *Pocahontas* and Tobias took off for the first time. To go to Oshkosh, they would have to leave in eight days, giving him just seven days to complete the required 40-hour fly-off, which included three required oil changes and various inspections. He successfully completed it all and took Jackie for her first flight the day before leaving for Oshkosh!

Jackie had gotten a job and couldn’t join Tobias for the three-day flight to Oshkosh, but she planned to meet him there for the weekend and the flight back to San Diego. So, his brother Mathias, who designed the paint scheme, came from Switzerland to join him



The judge saw that Jackie was in most of the photos and said, “If that girl really helped you that much with this airplane build, if you haven’t yet, you have to marry her!”

for the journey to Oshkosh. After dodging thunderstorms, they successfully made it and got the rock your wings command before flying into Wittman Regional Airport.

After three years and 2,500 hours, Tobias had successfully completed *Pocahontas*. But wait, there’s more!

Pocahontas, parked in homebuilt aircraft camping, was set to be judged. Tobias got to meet one of the judges, who asked to see photos of the build. Tobias showed him the CubTrekking Instagram page that Jackie had started. The judge saw that Jackie was in most of the photos and said, “If that girl really

helped you that much with this airplane build, if you haven’t yet, you have to marry her!”

On the Saturday of AirVenture, Tobias found a note on his seat to join the EAA awards ceremony that afternoon, by which time Jackie had arrived. Tobias was thrilled to receive a coveted Lindy, the kitbuilt champion award.

Jackie and Tobias Burch, EAA 1210089; San Diego, California
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Editor’s Note: For more of Jackie and Tobias’ adventures with *Pocahontas*, see page 110.



Love Takes Flight (and a Mission)

BY JACKIE AND TOBIAS BURCH, EAA 1210089

Editor's Note: For the story of how Jackie and Tobias built their airplane, see "What Our Members Are Building/Restoring" on page 104.

TOBIAS BURCH, EAA 1210089, grew up in Sarnen, Switzerland, near Lucerne. Growing up, he was always playing with RC airplanes, tractors, and other machines. While he wasn't interested in pursuing a pilot's license as a young man, when a school friend announced he signed up for a government-funded pilot training program, Tobias decided to sign up, too.

His friend failed out of the program on the first test, but Tobias continued training and received his pilot's license. He obtained an apprenticeship in electromechanics and then studied electrical engineering at the University of Lucerne. After getting a job as an electrical engineer, he was able to afford more flying, and that was when he realized he especially loved mountain flying through the Swiss Alps.

While working toward a master of business administration, he fulfilled his program's study abroad requirement in British Columbia. While enjoying a weekend at a lakeside lodge in the woods, he signed up for a scenic flight in a Beaver on floats, ended up in the co-pilot seat, and got to fly it. He was hooked on seaplane flying.

Tobias booked a trip for seaplane training in Florida, where he transferred his Swiss license to an FAA certificate, obtaining his seaplane rating in 2014. He realized how much fun it was to fly in the United States due to fewer restrictions compared to Switzerland. While in Alaska in 2015 for work training and finding it difficult to rent a seaplane, he signed up for bushplane training. He was hooked on the beauty of the scenery and the performance of the airplane. After returning from Alaska, Tobias found a four-year contract job and moved to the United States.

Jackie Steiner grew up in Southern California, where she was passionate about horseback riding. An avid equestrian, she earned a civil engineering degree at California State University in Chico with the intent of

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having a good job to support her hobby. She worked as a civil engineer, building a dam in Northern California for five years before leaving to obtain her MBA.

When she took a step back from horses due to the commitment, she found freedom in

traveling, hiking, and backpacking. She has hiked through the European Alps, Patagonia, the Sierra Nevada, Himalayas, Grand Canyon, New Zealand, and the Pacific Northwest, with the most notable treks including summiting a 20,000-foot peak in Nepal and completing the 200-plus-mile John Muir Trail. During these hiking adventures, she found time to complete her MBA.

Jackie always loved getting on airplanes and going places. She found it extremely relaxing, especially once she was on the airplane. So, meeting Tobias and combining his passion for flying with her passion for adventure was a great combination.

After building a CubCrafters Carbon Cub EX-2 together, Tobias flew it to EAA AirVenture Oshkosh 2019, where it won a Lindy.



A few weeks after returning to San Diego, Tobias wanted to show Jackie what bush flying was all about and found a nice strip in Southern California. Jackie, always up for an adventure, loved the whole experience of landing on a dirt runway and going for a walk. On a beautiful vista overlooking a valley, he took a box out of his backpack, got down on one knee, and asked her to marry him. She immediately said yes!

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MEMBERCENTRAL

MEMBERS/CHAPTERS IN ACTION

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 111

After their April 12, 2020, wedding, with a special appearance by their Cub, *Pocahontas*, they began planning the second biggest adventure of their lives: flying the length of the Americas, from Barrow, Alaska, to Ushuaia, Argentina, starting in April 2021.



This map shows the route as originally planned for this year, prior to the pandemic. See www.cubtrekking.com for updates as Jackie and Tobias reschedule for 2021.

The mission of the Pan-America trip is to continue raising awareness for general aviation and beyond border flying — and, of course, to have an adventure and make new friends from all around the world. They have a six-month time frame to fly the estimated 25,000 nm, in 275 flying hours with an estimated 21 border crossings. So far, they have received a huge amount of support, including offers throughout the Americas for open hangars, places to stay, and meals along the way. The flying community really is the best!

You can follow their adventure on Instagram @cubtrekking, on Facebook at CubTrekking, and online at www.CubTrekking.com. *EAA*