

HANGAR ECHOES

EXPERIMENTAL AIRCRAFT ASSOCIATION
CHAPTER 168 DALLAS TEXAS

Sun 'n Fun 1998

By Marvin Brott

This report on the 1998 Sun 'n Fun comes to you based on information from Ann and Mel Asberry, Don Christiansen, and the outstanding magazine and web site, the Flyer and AVweb. I certainly was not in Lakeland, Florida that week since my wife and I went the opposite direction to Hawaii for a little vacation.. So lets take a look at the reports.

Several years ago the Sun 'n Fun fly-in saw a small yellow airplane by Leon Davis where maybe a 150 pound pilot could fit into the cockpit. Every year we see new designs for high speed rockets made of some new substance. Well, this Sun 'n Fun took a major turn towards what must be called the "pregnant guppie era". We are talking about big airplanes, nothing of this Leon Davis little person airplane stuff.

The first to show case was the brand new, first-time-seen-at-an-airshow, or anyplace else for that matter, Private Explorer. The Explorer is the perfect kit plane for folks absolutely sick of camping under a wing, because with the Explorer, you travel with all the conveniences of home. It is 6'6" wide at its widest, 6'6" tall at its tallest, and from front to back the cabin is 20 feet long. It comes handily equipped with a bed and two chairs, and can be outfitted with whatever your heart desires, including a refrigerator



Private Explorer

and porta-potty. Do you think I am wrong when I say things have changed for the kitbuilt airplane world?

Explorer designer Dean Wilson indicates the plane is amazingly docile, and during its daily fly-by, its slow speed flight of around 45 miles per hour lightly loaded seemed to make it hang in mid-air.

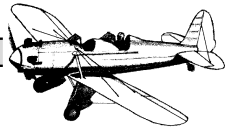
As lumpy as it looks, the Explorer can get you where you're going. Even fully loaded with 4102 pounds being

pulled by a 235 Hp engine, expect a decent climb of 743 feet per minute. Its cruise on 65% power is 100 mph. With full fuel on board, you'll be able to fly about 8 hours using 10 gallons an hour. When you feel the need for a rest break, simply unbuckle your seatbelt and use your porta-potty in the back, then make yourself a sandwich or take a nap. The Grangeville, Idaho based company says a kit with the 235Hp engine and decent

avionics runs about \$115-\$117 thousand dollars.

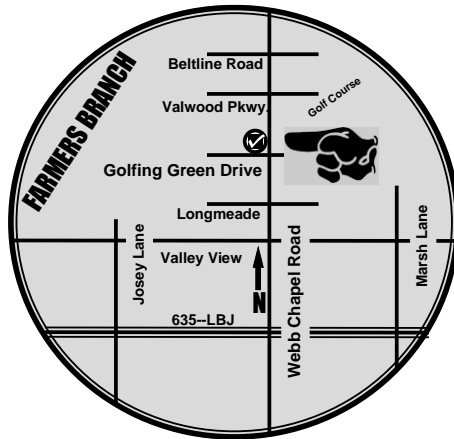
OK, are things getting a little cramped with your RV or Glasair. Consider our second guppie choice with the new eleven-seat Comp Air 10. This all composite prototype kit airplane has three seats across the front, two rows of three in club arrangement behind the cockpit, and another pair of seats against the aft bulkhead. Check the size out in the photo that Ann and Mel provided.

continued on page 7



June 2nd Chapter Meeting

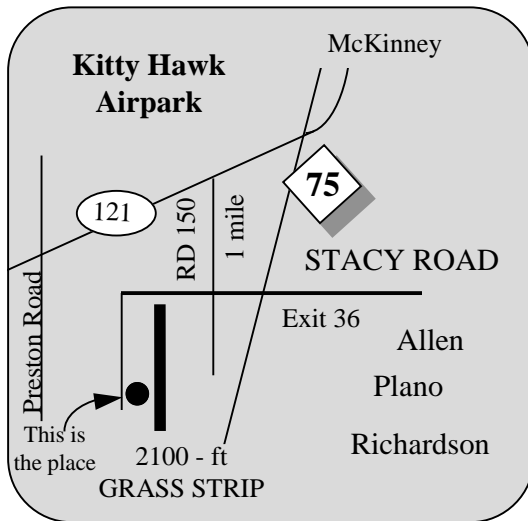
Our June 2nd (first Tuesday) Meeting will be held at the Farmers Branch Library, located on the Northwest corner of Webb Chapel and Golfing Green Drive. The meeting will be held in the auditorium and will begin at 6:30 p.m. and finish at 9:30 p.m. Please plan now to attend!



Our speaker will be Johnny Hit, helicopter combat pilot and veteran of Vietnam and the Gulf War. He will share with us his experiences in these two conflicts.

June 6th Fly-In / Drive-In

The June Fly-In will be at Kitty Hawk Airpark and will be hosted by Jim and Anita Rushing, and Don and Clara Stovall. Start time around 10:30 AM.



June 11th Director's Meeting

The June Director's Meeting will be from 7:00 - 8:45 PM at the Farmers Branch Library on the 11th. The following is a report by Tom Emerson from the May meeting.

1. Summer Fly-in locations were selected by the board. They are tentatively scheduled to be located at the following airports.
June 6, Kitty hawk
July 11 Hidden Valley Airpark
Aug 8 Mesquite Airport

2. Chapter funds investment plan: Jerry Mrazek and Gene Spalding are preparing to submit a check for \$5000 from the Chapter 168 savings account into a money market account offered by Vanguard. This will benefit the chapter with a secure investment with a higher return rate than we were receiving from the bank, and still allow access to the chapter funds when needs arise.

3. Chapter 168 non-profit status: It was noticed in January that the chapter has not maintained its non-profit status with the State for the past 16 years. Jerry Mrazek and Tom Moe have been pursuing this issue since January and are now ready to revise our non-profit status with the state. This will consist of sending in the necessary documents showing Jerry Mrazek as the current Chapter President, and of course the mandatory fee, which in this case is a one time \$25.00. The chapter can maintain a non-profit status by continuing to send an updated status form to Austin each year when the chapter elects a new president.

4. SWRFI Fly-in: Jerry Mrazek and Monroe MacDonald attended the SWRFI meeting in Abilene on Sat May 16. Questions have been raised about aircraft security measures in the tie down areas. There were some concerns about allowing the general public to have direct access to visiting aircraft parked and perhaps unattended in the tie down area.

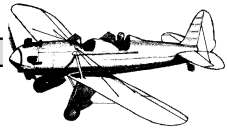
June 30th Newsletter Assembly

The July issue of Hangar Echoes will be assembled at Jayne and Richard Robbins on June 30th starting at 7:00 PM. The address is 227 Barnes Bridge in Summyvale, TX. Phone is 972-226-6699. The membership roster lists his project as a flying Bonanza.

Chapter 168 Newsletter On-Line

Jane and Jim Quinn are placing the Chapter 168 newsletter on the internet.

<http://www.vline.net/eaal68/>



A Message From the President Jerry Mrazek

We had a really good time at Bill and Mary Hurn's place last fly-in. My special thanks to Bill and Mary for having us over to their beautiful place and especially for arranging for the cross wind landing practice opportunity. I found out that my S-14 can land in a dignified manner in a 25 mph crosswind. Thanks to Chuck Farry for getting the trailer to the Hurn's. Thanks to John Williams for buying the groceries and to Chuck for getting them there. Thanks to Dave Carter for taking the trailer back to his hangar at Lancaster airport. Except for the wind, the weather was great and everyone had a great time. We had eight airplanes there, I believe, and it was great to be among them.

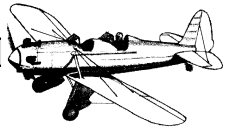


As I announced at the last chapter meeting, Marvin Brott has indicated that he wants to have more time to work on his RV-8 and will not be our newsletter editor after this issue. I have struggled with what to do and how to find a good replacement for Marvin. He has done such an outstanding job, it will be very difficult to replace him. We talked about it at the board meeting last Thursday and after several ideas were discussed someone came up with what I think is a wonderful idea. It seems that the primary complaint by the several people present who had past experience at being the newsletter editor is the incessant nature of the obligation. That is to say, the editor has the responsibility of putting out the newsletter every month no matter what. Marvin said he had often thought during the two and a half years that he has been doing it, that he would like to have three months off. Another said that there is no way to plan a vacation or be sick and you no sooner get last month's newsletter finished when it time to get started on the next months issue. Well the idea came up, "What if we had three editors who would rotate the responsibility?". Each editor would then only have to put out four issues each year and he would have two months between being responsible for the next issue. There was general acceptance of this idea among the board members. I asked Marvin if he would be willing to be one of the three in this sort of arrangement. He said he would. I have asked Clair Button and Sam Cooper the same question. Sam said that he will serve as one of the three editors and Clair indicated that he will serve for a couple of cycles but would rather not do it for the long term. My heartfelt thanks to all three of these guys. We need to get a third editor to replace Clair so please search your consciences and someone volunteer. I know that we have some people that would like to do this kind of work. The idea of a rotating editor deals with the fundamental problem of burnout effectively and allows us to retain the expertise that has been accumulated in the job of newsletter editor. We are also investigating several changes in the way we get the copy to the printer and do the mailings to try to reduce the load on the editor.

Monroe McDonald and I went to Abilene last Saturday (16 May) to participate in the planning meeting for the Southwest Regional Fly-In. As you know we have signed our chapter up to do the flight line operations. The plans are coming together nicely now and we are about to be able to estimate the number of volunteers that we will need. I plan to help and I hope that many of you will too. Please mark you calendars for the third weekend in October so you will be sure to be available to help. I learned that anyone who puts in at least 8 hours of service to the fly-in during the weekend, will get his admission free. President Stu McCurdy also put out a call for any experts who would like to teach a forum on some subject. They need to know soon so they can get all arrangements made. If any of you have the desire and the background for this, please contact either Monroe or me. We will see to it that your name and the forum you wish to teach gets to the SWRFI planners.

I want to say a few words about dreams. You may have heard all you want to hear about my airplane but please be patient with me because it is pertinent to this idea. I had a dream for many years to have my own airplane. I couldn't see how I could ever afford one and I rented airplanes to get to fly. I finally got up the courage to spend the money for a kit. I worked on the kit and had a number of interruptions that slowed my progress. I finally got the airplane finished, inspected, flown, and today I flew off the last of the 25 hours that the FAA assigned me to prove the airworthiness of the S-14. What has this to do with dreams? I'll tell you.

A dream is a wish that you have pictured in your mind. To turn a dream into a goal, one needs a plan. To make a dream a reality, one needs to take action. Once these steps have been taken, one only needs to persevere. If you have always wanted to build your



own airplane, develop a plan and then execute the plan. I know that you may need to rearrange your priorities but you can do that. Take it from someone who has realized his dream, you'll feel like a king and it only requires that you get started.

Happy Flying, Jerry

Friendship Flight '98

Bill Signs

Re-enact Eielson's '28 Arctic flight

As you may have heard, Bill Signs from Addison and Tom Smith from Grand Forks N.D., successfully completed their commemorative 2,185-mile Friendship Flight '98 from Barrow, Alaska, to Spitsbergen Island, Norway, early Wednesday April 15th. The 12.5-hour flight across the Arctic Circle was a re-enactment of Hatton, N.D., native Carl Ben Eielson's historic flight on April 15, 1928. Smith, who grew up in Grand Forks, said he met Eielson as a young boy and considered him a hero. "This has been a lifelong dream," he said of the re-enactment. Bill and Tom crossed 10 time zones during the flight, which took them near, but not over, the North Pole. "The sun was circling the airplane, basically," Bill said. "When we took off, it was at the right rear of the plane. It circled around to our nose. It was daylight the entire trip."

The flight was uneventful per Bill. It took 1.5 hours less than he had predicted, largely due to strong tailwinds. "No spills, thrills or chills," he said. Not that he could see, anyway. Bill was greeted at Spitsbergen by a snowstorm as he approached the remote island airport, forcing him to make an instrument approach through thick clouds for landing. The sea-level Longyearbyen Airport is tucked among mountain peaks that rise about 3,000 feet.

After arriving, they were officially greeted by the governor of the Svalbard Islands. Spitsbergen is one of the islands. They presented proclamations noting the historic re-enactment signed by North Dakota Gov. Ed Schafer and Alaska Gov. Tony Knowles. They also presented a gift from Schafer, a carving depicting Eielson.

Eielson was a University of North Dakota graduate. He learned to fly while serving in the military during the last months of World War I. He moved to Alaska in 1922. In 1923, he made the first airmail delivery in Alaska's history, flying from Fairbanks to Nenana. His 1928 flight, with George Hubert Wilkins, from Barrow to Spitsbergen was a test of skill and physical stamina. The trip, in a wooden 1927 Lockheed Vega, took 20.5 hours. According to the 1992 book "Polar Pilot" by the late Dorothy Page of Wasilla, Alaska, they carried a load of about 3,000 pounds. It consisted mostly of gasoline, along with arctic survival gear and 40 pounds of cold food, including chocolate, raisins and pemmican. Eielson was killed in 1929 when an airplane he was flying crashed while he was on a rescue mission to an ice-bound ship off the coast of Siberia.

When you get the opportunity to see Bill out at Addison Airport, give him a big congratulations.

Lisa and Martin Wright Hit it Big with April Issue of Sport Aviation

I assume all of you have by now read the Jack Cox article starting on page 60 of the April issue of Sport Aviation. I learned a lot about Lisa and Martin with respect to their backgrounds and their business in Frisco. The pictures were absolutely great and of course Jack Cox always gives a lot of information on the plane he is featuring. In this case it's the award winning Pulsar N242PW that they completed last year. This is not an airplane that sits in the hangar. While the weather keeps a lot of people out of Florida for Sun 'n Fun, Lisa and Martin made the fly-in. Congratulations to both of you from Chapter 168 for being selected to be in Sport Aviation.



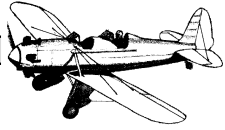
Lisa and Martin Wright's Pulsar

When the weight of the paper equals the weight of the airplane, only then you can go flying.

attributed to Donald Douglas (Mr. DC-n)

My definition of an optimist has to be the Luftwaffe F-104 pilot who gave up smoking!

John Wiley



Scott Goodley All American Aviation

May 5 Chapter meeting speaker was Scott Goodley from "All American Aviation", located at Addison airport. His topic was "Aircraft maintenance and record keeping." Scott presented an outstanding talk about maintenance records. Thanks Scott for being our speaker.

Cap Button Pain

I hate to admit that it took me so long to figure this out, but in the hope it will help someone else as slow as I, here goes.

I usually wear a baseball-type cap when flying (such as the one our chapter or EAA sells), and also wear a headset. If the head-set band gets on top of the little button they put on all those caps, it punches a painful dent in my head. I always assumed that the button must be somehow necessary since they all have it.

I finally got around to pulling one off and found that it doesn't hold anything together, and the cap looks just fine without it. I immediately smacked myself in the forehead and went around and pulled the buttons off all my caps. A large set of diagonal-cutting pliers just under the button wedges it off without damaging the cloth.

by Monroe McDonald

Mayfest at McKinney

Boy! Were we happy when a dry-line moved all that "stuff & smoke" out of the area on Friday before the McKinney Mayfest and airport event for the Young Eagles. I was relieved it did not move back in on Saturday because we would have disappointed a large number of kids and parents.

Chapter 168 along with the Texins Flying Club and other resident pilots from McKinney airport took 88 kids on their first airplane ride/experience Saturday, May 16th. The airport personnel were organized, thanks to coordination from Pete Huff and Tom Ferraro. Chuck Farry and his group of CAP cadets, and Chapter volunteers ran the flight line with precision. We also had some young people volunteering from a local Scout group. They helped print the certificates and acted as runners to escort the kids to the flightline. Chapter volunteers helped me with registration. The city of McKinney furnished Polaroid film and someone to take a photo of each child and pilot returning from their flight. It was great fun to see the excitement in the face of each child in their photo; "Wow, I just had an airplane ride."

It was a good day all around. We had a great display of some custom cars on the ramp with a static display of aircraft and the city furnished a shuttle to and from town for other activities "on the square." There were lots of planes and pilots,

almost more than we could use, but I'll never complain about that. As always, the pilots had about as much fun as the kids!! A big "Thank You" goes to all that participated.

By Ann Asberry

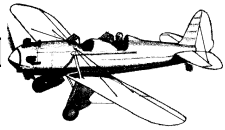
Some People Get Lucky

During the Mayfest at McKinney, I got really lucky. Bo Bauereis and I were waiting for our next **Young Eagle** rider so we were looking over Tom Ferraro's super nice Skybolt and Pacer. All of sudden Bo asked me if I would like to take a ride in his Glasair III. Wow, would I. This was my lucky day.

After a few jokes about an Old Eagle, we saddled up and taxied out to the runway. My first impression was how comfortable the seating and cockpit felt plus how complex the panel looked, lots of stuff. Layout of the panel was well done. We moved to the center line of the runway and Bo let the IO 540 with its 300+ horses start pulling. My next impression was that my headset was slowly sliding off my head due to the acceleration. We climbed out at 2500 to 3000 fpm to 5000 in no time. I talked to Brad Mitchell in the afternoon who took off after us and he was impressed with the climb from his vantage point. The controls felt light, solid, and well balanced. With the feel of the controls and ease with which Bo steered the Glasair around in the sky, I thought of Bob Herrendin and the super aerobatic routine he did in the Glasair. I felt that this was an airplane you could feel comfortable in a fairly short time but don't get sloppy with your flying or you might not like what would be happening. My impression on the way back to the airport to landing was how "fast" the entire process takes. Sort of reminded me of the ride I took with Pete Huff in his high performance White Lightning. Final impression, the Glasair III is a serious IFR cross-country airplane with a lot of class. Gee, I wish I had one. Bo, thanks a lot for the ride.

by Marvin Brott





Young Eagles Fly-In At McKinney

There are four, no make that five, key ingredients to a successful Young Eagles Fly-In - pilots, planes, kids, weather and volunteers.

Despite predictions of a continuation of the "Mexican Haze" that had plagued North Texas the past week, Saturday, May 16th dawned, if not bright, at least clear enough for flying. That took care of the one concern, the weather.

Through the able assistance of the Texins Flying Club which is based at McKinney, we had plenty of planes and pilots. The final count was 88 new Young Eagles which although nice could have been much higher. We could have handled a least twice that number had they been available.

Fly started shortly after the pilot's briefing as several of the pilots were predicting that the haze then covering Dallas, would soon be in the sky over McKinney. Fortunately, the haze held off until very late in the afternoon.

Despite erroneous information published in the McKinney newspaper, we did fly some kids in Experimental airplanes. Don Christiansen's yellow RV-4 and Bo Baucreis did his job flying Young Eagles but it was noticed by several that some of his passengers were a little long in the tooth to be claimed as Young Eagles (Tandy, give me a little break). Owen Bruce did a great job flying four Young Eagles, one at time, in his Luscombe and even managed to get his plane into the Parade of Flight.

This Airport Board of McKinney was very helpful with all of the arrangements including clearing out the entire main hanger which provided more space than we are accustomed to having to setup and organize these flights. The Aviation Explorer Post from McKinney also contributed several young men and ladies to help as runners and to help run the PC printing the Young Eagle certificates. Nothing beats having computer expertise to help work out the bugs in database entry and printing of the certificates.

A total of 21 pilots made it into our database. This group was about evenly divided between EAA 168 and the Texins Flying Club. Dick Forbes of Texins was credited with flying the most Young Eagles with 9. The C-182 he flew turned out to be a heavy hauler.

The fly-in had all that you might expect at a Young Eagles Fly-In including the mother who became a bit anxious when her children were not back when she expected them to be. Fortunately the plane landed before we had to go to air traffic control to try to find them to calm her worries. The Airport Board provided Polaroid snapshots of each Young Eagle crew as they deplaned as well as a nifty blue cap for many of the volunteers.

All in all, it was a good fly-in. The volunteers, including the new Young Eagles Coordinator, learned a lot that will make the next one better organized and smoother.

By Tandy Allen

- JUNE 5-6 - Bi-Plane Expo, Phillips Field, Bartlesville, OK (918) 336-3976
- JUNE 11 - Landing Airpark 11-3PM BBQ 80 NE Waco Contact Clint Burton 254-826-5078
- JUNE 12-14 - EAA, 36th Annual Antique Airplane Association Fly-In, Gainesville Airport, Gainesville, TX (817) 668-4565
- JUNE 13 - Chapter 983's Meeting with Young Eagle Guests, Program and hopefully a demo skydiving jump by Sport Skydivers, followed by Young Eagle Flying, We'll need you and your airplane. Contact Dave Moore
- JUNE 20 - Clifton, TX (famous for Gordon Winfield) Clifton Fly-In, Municipal Airport, (254) 675-3771
- JUNE 26-27 - Denison, TX, Grayson County Airport, Lone Star Aerobatic Championships (972) 267-0885
- JUNE 26-28 - Cedar Mills Marina, Lake Texoma, 2nd Annual Lake Texoma Ultralight Gathering (817) 232-3379
- JULY 18 - Fly-In breakfast, Granbury Muni, Cooked by EAA Chapter 983 Exec. Committee, Followed by a Flying Start Program at Granbury Muni.
- JULY 29-AUG 4...OSHKOSH. Need I say more!

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The bulk of mankind is as well equipped for flying as thinking.
Jonathon Swift

In the Alaska bush I'd rather have a two hour bladder and three hours of gas than vice versa

Kurt Wien

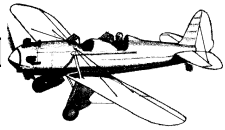
What is that mountain goat doing way up here in the clouds?
Gary Larson, in a well-known 'Farside' cartoon

Joey, have you ever been to a Turkish prison?
Captain Oveur, from the 1980 movie 'Airplane.'

Calendar of Events

June 1998

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Continued from Page 1

The company expects that some builders will not configure the Comp Air 10 with 11 seats, but go for the camper or sport utility vehicle (SUV, I love it) approach. You will be able to recognize this airplane by its noteworthy twin F-18 vertical stabilizers. You see, when the single tail was calculated for size, it would not fit in a standard T-hangar. It has a 285 hp Continental which is really kind of small for an airplane of this size. They would like to see 350 hp and up. Gross weight is 4,800 to 5,600 pounds, depending on the powerplant.

Now for a go-fast airplane like we normally see being introduced at Oshkosh and Lakeland. The small Glassic Composites canard design four place SQ-2000 running a Lycoming IO-360 engine cruises along at 240-250 mph on about 11.4 gph, climbs a blistering 2000-2500 feet per minute, and can handle a 90 degree landing crosswind of 25-35 knots was a big hit. The SQ-2000 looked fast even parked on the grass shaded by a blue tarp.

Now for some resurrections. Remember the Wing Derringer? This great looking two-place twin designed in the late 1960s by John Thorpe had two seats and a huge 250 pound baggage compartment. This reintroduction will be with a two plus-two setup. Then there was an ad in the official Sun 'n Fun program about the new Luscombe Renaissance, "Less than 80K, ready to fly! Orders now being accepted for the 150Hp Czech-built 8F. Available in 18 to 24 months. (I always hate those long waits) The Seminole tribe of Florida came to Sun 'n Fun to try its hand at the new production airplane, the new Micco SP20, a two-place retract sporting a Lycoming IO-360 with a promised max cruise of 160 kts. It's really a derivative of the Meyers 145. They have everything lined up to make buying an SP-20 relatively painless. Partner Eaglemark Financial Services, a division of Harley-Davidson Motorcycles ("we're pairing an all-American plane with an all-American motorcycle") will finance up to 85% of the selling price for up to 20 years.

For most of the exhibitors, Oshkosh and Lakeland are a big deal. Check out the following comment by Mooney to AVweb. Susan Harrison from Mooney, says Mooney will sell one or two of its high performance aircraft as a direct result of Sun 'n Fun. Competition in the new plane market is fierce and sticker shock scares many away. "It used to be we could count on a sale every seven demo flights" she said, "now it's every eleven." In another competitive area, the GPS wars, Garmin has made its 90 stronger and faster and renamed it the Garmin 92. The new 12-channel GPS will grab hold of

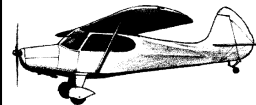
satellites and not let go. In addition, it comes outfitted with a worldwide Jeppesen database and unbelievably, sells for \$499.

As a wrap up, some of the comments I have been hearing about Sun 'n Fun is that it is getting a little expensive. If the \$3.50 glasses of lemonade doesn't get your attention, the \$60 gate admission will. This is per person, husband and wife for \$120. And of course the warbird flightline was large and

impressive with the same comments as Oshkosh. One big attraction was the Yankee Lady B-17G, a meticulously restored bird. But while the 17 looks good on the ground, air show visitors didn't get to see her put through her paces. Pilots with the Yankee Air Force who flew the plane down from Michigan were upset at having to pay the \$15 dollar admission each day to get in. "Can you believe," one told AVweb, "having to pay to see our



OWN airplane?" (Wow, am I smiling)



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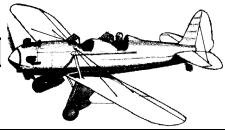
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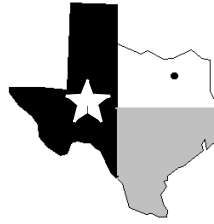
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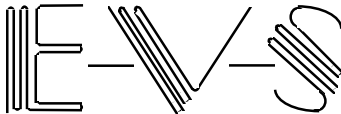
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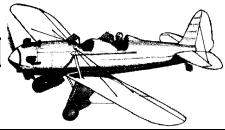
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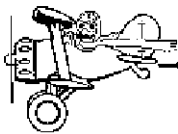
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Tommy Hawk Tales

by Brownie Seals

I've been on this topic before. But, some of the talk in the neighborhood (aviation, that is) sort of yanked my chain. So, I thought it time to review the subject and pass on a few new bits of information.

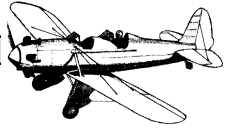
Talking to a friend the other day I heard, "Tomahawk" are unfairly maligned. They are not at all any more likely to spin than any other".

Digging a little deeper into the source of that unsupported comment, I learned that the story was told by an FBO/Flight Instructor who rents and uses Tomahawks. Not an unbiased authority. The victim had been given instruction in a T Hawk and during the demo no spins erupted.

I have flown some hours in T Hawks. And I am confident that I can demonstrate "not getting into a spin". I also feel that I can demonstrate getting into one. What I am not so sure of, is getting out of one. (And I taught Spins and used Spins as a part of my Air Show routine for years)

When T Hawks were brand-new, a student of mine decided to go to an FBO where he could fly T Hawks. After he had some lessons and a few hours in the plane he kept coming to me for advice. His description of the way the plane behaved puzzled me. So, I got checked out in the T Hawk and spent some time exploring its responses. I spun it many times, I stalled it, I flew it SLOW, I flew it fast, I pushed it to the limit in all directions. It was manageable. Not always predictable, but manageable. (This was a new very low time plane fresh from the factory) I love all airplanes. But I never really "wanted" a T Hawk. It was squirrely.

A few years back I was helping do the training in a Certified Flight Instructor recertification program. My particular subject was spins. In preparation for my presentations I contacted NASA Spin Program flight test pilots James Patton and James Bowman of the NASA Langley Research Center in Hampton, Virginia. I learned a lot of very useful and enlightening information. One, almost an aside, bit of info that I picked up in the conversations, was "the Tomahawk is unpredictable in the spin mode". It seems that they had been asked to review the spin tests for the T Hawk. (this is in the 1983/84 time frame) One of the first things they learned was that the stall strips installed on the leading edges of the wings were never in the same place on any two planes. Investigation revealed that production required that each plane be flown and the stall strips adjusted to obtain "reasonable" spin behavior. Further into the spin test program where repeatable data was needed to confirm the characteristics, they found that after a T Hawk had been spun, the next time they tried to spin that particular airplane, it would not repeat the previous data. Investigation showed that the wing flexed enough to take a permanent change in position after each spin episode.



I completed my training preparation and did not continue the dialog to learn the outcome of their test program. But, thereafter, I avoided flying T Hawks. I was not surprised when the current reports regarding T Hawk spin problems began to make the aviation news media.

In addition to the NASA T Hawk testing there were trouble reports from both Swedish and British test pilots, and the Australian Department of Transportation requesting changes to the behavior of the plane, most of which went unanswered. For the British, Piper added a note in the Pilots Operating Handbook, it cautioned pilots not to delay forward movement of the control wheel.

The stall spin accident rate of the T Hawk is five times higher than that of the Cessna 150/152. FAA's data shows 22 T Hawk spin accident reports which end with ". . . instructor demonstrating slow flight . . . spin resulted . . . failed to recover before ground impact." One pair of survivors, an FSDO test pilot and a CFI candidate got a T Hawk into a spin and managed to get it out by releasing their seat belts and putting their heads over the instrument panel with their bodies against the panel. FAA awareness of this treacherous behavior is exposed by an operations notice - that pilots should be prepared (and apparently trained) to use "unusual" procedures for spin recovery in T Hawks.

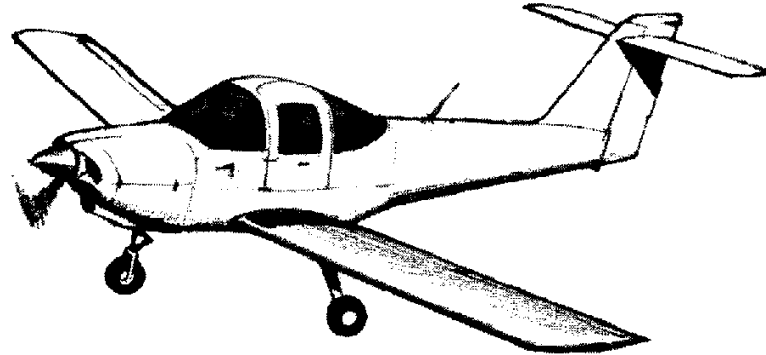
The NTSB began trying to get the FAA to examine the problem in July 1997. The board wanted to ensure that it is impossible to obtain unrecoverable spins per FAR 23.221. They recommended tests with two airplanes (due to wide variations in production samples and flight behavior). The FAA conducted limited tests with only one. They insisted that available certification data was adequate.

Piper production test pilots have been unpredictable in their comments regarding their tests. Early on their reports said the planes were well behaved. Later some have come out with reports of unpredictable behavior. A former chief test pilot said that the T Hawk "as it first came out of production was nothing like the prototype". He also said that no two production planes were alike. Some broke suddenly and unpredictably left or right at stall. And most production aircraft really wanted to spin.

On that topic. The T Hawk had an astonishing two to three second per revolution spin rate (that's much faster than my Pitts). And the official test data shows a descent rate of up to 10,000 feet per minute. (that too is much much faster than my Pitts). The FAA in another of its few acknowledgments of a possible problem now recommends that slow flight and spins should be practiced at 7,000 feet AGL.

Examining the NASA findings of the wing flexes, I discover that one of the many changes made between

prototype and production was replacing 11 full ribs in the wing with 4 full ribs and 4 nose ribs. In addition the production wing was fabricated from thinner material than the prototype. It is not surprising that the wing can be permanently "bent" by the loads of flight.



The FAA has basically told the NTSB that it does not plan to do any more testing on the T Hawk and that the T Hawk will continue to be a certified two place training plane.

On that basis I do not recommend that my friends fly T Hawks. And I do not plan to fly one myself. As I said

before I have flown them and so have many others. We are fortunate to be here to discuss this. Let's try to keep it that way. You all be careful out there.

Brownie Seals rseals@flash.net

Good Things to Come

One of the best things to happen to aviation in the last several years has been the GPS navigational system. The second best thing will be when we get real-time weather into the cockpit. See the following by James Wynbrandt as edited for the space in this newsletter.

Virginia is set to become the first state with a fully operational datalink system, delivering real-time weather images, including Nexrad radar, to aircraft in its airspace. The commercial uplink service, WxLink, will be provided throughout the state under a contract with ARNAV Systems, which also manufactures the units that display the data.

The display mounts in the radio stack and can display weather with overlays from GPS, Loran or other inputs on its five-inch diagonal screen. The system is also capable of two-way text messaging and tracking of aircraft with the equipment on board.

The Nexrad radar image is displayed in three colors, progressing from green to yellow to red, with intensity of each color reflecting the intensity of the weather. Lightning activity is not currently displayed, but that capability is expected to be added soon, along with text transmission of Sigmet and Airmets.