



RVator's Log

Newsletter of the Twin Cities RV Builder's Group

September 2012

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Upcoming Events

September fly-in and picnic: There is nothing better than our famously perfect September weather, a grass strip, RVs and great folks. Join us for our annual Family Picnic and Fly-in on September 22. Details on page 8!!!!

* * * * *

Minnesota Wing Van's Air Force

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life with his #1 son who was the absolute epitome of a 60's high-school nerd. It all went well as I remember and they both flew with me many times again.

In my airline days at Northwest, often prior to departure the lead flight attendant would bring a nervous first time flyer up to the cockpit. Nowadays we consider it a rarity to find someone who has not flown in an airliner. But we would patiently explain a little of the cockpit and how the flight was a team effort of many airline professionals and it was safer than driving to the airport and so on and so on. Sometimes while we would be bumping along through turbulence, or wind or rain, I would think of the 184 passengers in the

Shop Notes

Next to the excitement of making the first flight, giving that "first RV ride" ranks near the top of the list of major life events. The last few months of construction brings an endless series of tasks necessary to get that new RV in the air. After the thrill of that initial test flight has faded, the next forty hours of flight test time settle down into a hopefully predictable routine of flights used to gather data and work out any bugs in your new RV.

We all have some special person pre-selected to be the first passenger after breaking free of the flight test regime. Could be one's spouse, significant other, son, daughter, good buddy or whoever. Our goal is to make a good first impression, provide a short, safe introductory flight in that beautiful RV and not to do anything dumb.



It really doesn't matter if you are giving that first ride in a RV, Cessna 150, or Boeing 757, the objective as PIC is to make that first-timer a happy customer. It is real easy to get complacent and forget that this can be a REALLY BIG DEAL to our passenger. On the outside they might appear calm and confident as they climb in that right seat, but they could be on the verge of major panic! Put yourself in their shoes and consider that that are about to fly in a little, bitty "Piper Cub" with one of those private pilots who built that little bitty airplane in his garage!! That can take a big heap of courage.

I can recall giving my first ride after I got my private license some 45 plus years ago. I had this all planned out to get checked out in a new Cessna 172 so I could take my dad and younger brother for their first ride. I had just turned 17, my brother was 12, and my dad (who really knew nothing about flying) seemed to think nothing of it that he was about to risk his



New private pilot with my "little" brother Jim. My dad took the photo – May 1966 (notice that snappy plaid jacket!!)

back and wonder if anyone was concerned, indifferent, or maybe terrified. We always tried to find a good ride and keep the boredom level as high as possible.

I have given dozens of first rides in light airplanes over the years. Invariably every single one of them has totally enjoyed the flight. I make it short, usually in the evening in perfectly calm weather if at all possible. I really want a convert to the joy of flying in a light airplane. A couple weeks ago, my wife told me one of her co-workers would like to go for a ride in our newly finished RV-7. Colleen had never been flying in a light airplane ever. Sure many trips in big aluminum tubes, but never in one of those “personal” airplanes she would see fly overhead.

So we picked a nice calm evening in July. It had been pretty hot during the day but just before sunset things had smoothed out. I strapped her into the right seat of the RV and explained in simple terms some of the doo-dads on the instrument panel and some of the sights and sounds that she would experience. We took off and flew around Lake Elmo, Hudson, and then over her house in Oakdale. She was really pumped up before we left as obviously the adrenalin was overflowing. But she loved it and after 20 minutes we landed just as the sun was setting.

I week later, I received this hand-written thank you:

“Dear Doug,

It still seems like a dream! Your beautiful, sleek, plane, taxiing down the runway with me inside, gently lifting off – quiet, smooth, awesome – looking up to blue, down to beautiful shades of green and gold, towns, rivers, lakes, roads and even my home. Then gently touching down. I can’t believe I was riding in that “homemade” plane! Thanks so much for this adventure. My family is so jealous!”

This makes all those hours in the shop worth it. Thanks, Colleen... you made my day!!!

* * * * *

Is this a record???

- Doug

WAY back when I started on my RV-4, John Field was my mentor. He had started his RV-4 about 6 months before I did (he bought his tail kit in summer of 1990). Every once in a while, I would head down to John’s shop in River Falls and consult him on how on earth to figure out the nuances of RV-4 construction. John’s workmanship was always a cut above my frantic hack-job of aluminum and fiberglass.



As we all are well aware, life sometimes gets in the way of a consistent building timeline. That “four-year” project can easily get stretched and stretched because of a wild variety of reasons. But John persevered and last year Tom Berge and I visited his shop to see how he was coming along. We were pleasantly surprised to see his -4 resembling a very nice airplane. His workmanship was still first class and it was great to see a new -4 about to make its way out to the airport.

So finally, after what **might be a record 22 years**, John was ready to fly. Tim Mahoney did the finally FAA inspection and sign off and shortly thereafter John made the first flight out of Lake Elmo airport.

A new Lycoming 0-320 swinging a Hartzell C/S prop powers the bright yellow -4. Instrumentation is a Dynon Skyview EFIS box, which is all that is needed for his VFR fun machine.

Congrats John on a project well worth a “perseverance” award!!!



Colleen and yours truly – RV grins all around

Don's RV-9A Rebuilt

- Doug

Don Schwartz of New Lisbon, WI reports that his -9A rebuilt project is just about ready to fly. This note from Don:

Hey Doug / Tom

The project is closer. Steve Myers finished paint last week and now the interior, tail numbers and some final touches. Will be working on it more after Oshkosh.



Hard to believe, I bought it from the insurance company in October of last year. The owner nosed it over going to Oshkosh from California. I am pretty excited to get it in the air.



BTW... our EAA fly-in will be Saturday, September 1 at the Mauston Airport (82C). PICs eat free!!

A RV Turn of Events

-Peter Fruehling



Early in the summer I received a call from Stein telling me that Garmin was interested in displaying my RV-7 in their booth during Oshkosh this year. Of course I was honored but

little did I know the twists and turns this story would take for the next 6 weeks.

As many of you know there is always a list of items that need to be dealt with even on a plane fresh out of phase one. When I spoke to Garmin and confirmed my plans to work in their booth from show open to show close this year, I knew it would be a race against time to get everything "show ready". With a fresh detail and a few other odds and ends done, off I went for 8 days in the Garmin booth and 8 nights in the Stein Air house. I don't know which I was more concerned about but was VERY thankful Stein was willing to let me barge in and stay with them!

Working the Garmin booth with my Stein Air shirt on turned out to be a total blast. I had people asking questions ranging from "Is this a kit plane?" to "How do you time the P-Mags you installed on this plane?" The common denominator was that everyone was excited about airplanes and seemed to like the RV-7. On day 3, I had an individual really like the plane...so much so that he offered to write me a check on the spot if he could fly it home. He showed me a picture of the King Air he owned and it was clear he was serious. Then he pulled a stack of \$100 bills out of his wallet and offered me a deposit along with a cash offer for what he was willing to pay. He was looking for a hot rod RV-7 for his two boys to get their tail wheel endorsement in and learn to fly. ...not sure the RV-7 is right for that mission but nevertheless I was flattered.

Not 3 hours later another individual came in to the booth and asked me to walk him through the airplane. He said he had been looking for an RV-7 for some time and was interested to know more about mine. He truly appreciated the work that went in to the plane over the last 5 years and the care that was taken at all levels. Tom Berge and I cut no corners on that plane and he clearly understood that. When we were done going through the it he asked if I might be interested in selling it. ...two people in one day? Really?



Garmin stars: Peter and his -7

The truth is Beth and I had a plan for the RV-7 based on the fact that our family expanded during the build. However, that plan did NOT involve selling the plane right now! We spoke that night and considered all the options we could think of. We even sought out professional counseling that night from Doug and Jean Weiler. Their family had grown up with both two-place and four-place airplanes so their perspective was important. We made the decision that at the very least, access to a four-place airplane was something we needed for flying to continue to bring our family together. With that thought and the vision of someone flying away with my beloved RV-7, we called Dr. Scott Alperin back to let him know that we were ready. And just like that, I thought needed a ride home from Oshkosh!!!

My flight home from Oshkosh was certainly bittersweet. I

thought about a few people that hadn't been up in the airplane yet that really deserved to fly in it. First and foremost was my daughter Teagan. I had been doing taxi tests with her to make sure she would leave the headset on but she and I hadn't flown yet. The time was now so I finished my flight home from Oshkosh, went home to pick her up and



Is this an RV grin or what????

we flew that very same day! Here is Teagan's very first RV grin! The next day I took my mother for her first flight and then my father. I knew when I landed with my father that it was the last time I would ever fly that airplane. I was good with that as a last flight.

We made arrangements for Dr. Alperin to fly his Piper Jet Prop in to KANE to get some dual the week after Oshkosh and then take it home a few weeks after that. In the meantime, I started thinking about what in the world I was going to fly. The thought of only being able to fly a big four place Cessna or Piper after flying something like the RV-7 was frightening. An RV-10 was certainly talked about but again, was it really the right investment for us seeing that we had not flown once as a family yet? We decided flying with a club might be a good way for us to take our time with the decision and see how we liked family general aviation. We determined after flying with Scott in his Jet Prop that one of these would certainly fit the bill!



Peter and Scott – turbine comfort!

After Scott's day of dual in the RV-7 I started the annual and had time to think (dangerous!) It took me exactly one day to realize that it would be very smart to find an RV-4 to fly while we were figuring out this family flying thing. That just makes good sense right? It took me one more day to realize there are no RV-4's comparable to the one I was comparing the other s to. The RV-4 in my mind was the original N722DW built by Doug Weiler. It was the very first RV I saw in person and the first RV I ever sat in. The obvious next step seeing that I couldn't find one I liked was to find Doug's plane and make it for sale! As luck would have it, the owner of Doug's RV-4 was open to the idea and I bought it sight unseen. The original purchaser of Doug's plane is an absolutely super guy and after several conversations and pictures it was clear that he had cared for the RV-4 very well. So on Saturday, August 18th Scott and his instructor arrived on Delta Airlines and flew the RV-7 home. The very next day the owner of Doug's RV-4

landed at KANE with my new plane! ...it was tough but I survived the entire 24 hours with no airplane in the hangar. Bill still charged me for that night of hangar space.



Peter and a strangely familiar RV-4

It was a crazy 6 weeks of working late nights prepping the RV-7 for the show, living at the Stein Air house, working at Oshkosh for 8 days, completing an annual, selling the plane, buying a very special RV-4 and figuring out what we're going to do for a four place plane. Good thing I have a day job so I can rest up.

Gary's RV-7A is up and running

An update from Gary Sharp of Cedar Rapids, IA:

Doug,

I am sending you a few pictures of my just completed RV-7A.



I flew it the first time on December 16th before I left for Florida to spend the winter. I now have 20 hours on it of the 40 required.

Hopefully the next 20 hours will go faster. It is at least 15 mph faster than the 6A that I built and flew for 12 years. I sold the 6A to a person in California who had Paul Rosales fly it home for him.



Hope to see you at the picnic in Sept.

Gary Sharp

Preachin' time

- Doug

Time to put on my preacher's hat....



You may have seen a viral video that appeared on the Internet in mid-August that depicted an ill-fated departure of a Stinson out of an Idaho airport. The mishap was well documented with a

small video camera mounted in the airplane, which shows a takeoff from a 5000-foot grass strip with a field elevation of 6300 feet and OAT of 80 degrees. Density altitude was computed at 9100 feet. The 165 hp Stinson had 4 adult men aboard. I have flown Stinsons like this in my youth they are hardly a rocket ship a sea level much less at 9100 feet. On this recorded takeoff, they roll and roll and roll down the strip and stagger in the air and mush along for a couple miles never getting above treetop level until they tangle with forest. Thankfully they all survive but it raises the inevitable question, "what were they thinking??" Jean and I flew our RV-7 out of Colorado Springs last month with a density altitude of 8200 and I was amazed at the reduction in performance.

Common sense prevails as the best defense against getting into a situation like this. Personally I have been proud of our local

group of RV pilots in that everyone I know seems to be conscientious and thoughtful in their attitude towards flight safety.

Along those lines, let me

MASTERY FLIGHT TRAINING

refer you to a couple excellent sources on the subject. First is Tom Turner's Mastery Flight Training newsletter "*Flying Lessons*". This is published once a week and you can sign up for it on his website here:

<http://www.mastery-flight-training.com/>

Tom Turner resume is impressive:

Mastery Flight Training founder and president Thomas P. Turner holds an ATP certificate with instructor, CFII and MEI ratings, a Masters Degree in Aviation Safety, and was named 2010 National FAA Safety Team Representative of the Year and 2008 FAA Central Region CFI of the Year. Three times accredited a Master CFI, Tom ([resume](#)) has been Lead Instructor for FlightSafety International's Bonanza pilot training program at the Beechcraft factory; production test pilot for engine modifications; aviation insurance underwriter; corporate pilot and safety expert; Captain in the United States Air Force; and contract course developer for Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. He now leads a 9400-member aviation safety foundation. With over 3700 hours logged, including more than 2400 as an instructor, Tom writes, lectures and instructs extensively from his home at THE AIR CAPITAL--Wichita, Kansas.

These weekly newsletters provide a wealth of information. Although not RV-specific, there is a LOT of food-for-thought regarding the safe operation of any aircraft.

Secondly, a seemingly little-known gem is the RV Flight Safety website. Tom Berge and I used this ground training reference when we received FAA-approval for our RV training syllabus. This website was written by former MN-Winger Dave Maib (retired chief pilot for Target Corp and RV-10 builder) and Joe Schneider (RV-7 builder and owner).

RV
Flight Safety

The RV Safety website is a comprehensive "ground school" that is RV specific. There is a safety "blog", references and downloads and a complete RV flight safety course that covers everything from pilot proficiency, decision making, airmanship, professionalism. You even get a graduation certificate for completing all of the training modules. I consider this must reading for every new RV pilot. If you can, partake of this great source of knowledge. The link is:

<http://www.rvflightsafety.org/>

Thoughts of AirVenture 2012

-Tom Irlbeck

First of all, it was a great Get-Together. My 10 yr old granddaughter and I flew down on Wednesday morning July 25th. We blasted off around 0630 with the bird loaded up pretty good as we were going to camp out for 3 days. Emily had to tuck her legs up together, behind my seat because we had coolers, food bags and what-nots stuffed in the heel wells. It is now a family tradition that the grandkids go to OSH with grampa when they are 10 years old, and this is my second trip with 10 yr old grandkids. Two years ago, I took Michael in his 10th year, and it was great fun.

On the way down at 5,500 ft we had a little tail wind and were cruising along at 220 mph, not bad for a 12 yr old -8. I briefed Emily about letting me know if she sees another aircraft in the air at any time, and not to talk when we start the arrival procedure, UNLESS she sees an aircraft. For some reason, I don't think when she is older, and on a date, there will ever be a lack of conversation.



Emily and "The Bear"

We took a ride on the 1929 Ford Tri Motor, a plane that Emily's great grandmother had flown on in the 30's, when she was around 14 years old. OSH has added a lot of fun activities for younger kids, like climbing walls and the bungee shots. On Thursday night we attended the fly-in outdoor theater and watched "*The Rocketeer*". On the walk over to the theater, we realized that most carried chairs, and we hadn't brought ours. We noticed a local RV trailer with a bunch of chairs, stopped in and asked if we could borrow a

couple. Naturally they said yes, so we had chairs, free popcorn and a great movie to watch.

I had a special guest stop in, a buddy of mine who I hadn't seen in 46 years. Jerry Person and I were cadets in the Naval Flight Training program together over 46 years ago. He got his wings a week before me, and we parted company. Jerry contacted me around a month ago and a friend of his knew me, gave him my telephone number, and our reunion started. He flew for the airlines, and stayed in the Naval Reserve system, and is also flying civilian aircraft, presently flying a GlassStar.

Weather was definitely interesting. Wednesday was hot, Thursday REALLY stormy, and Friday nice. One WWI biplane torn loose and flipped over in the War Birds Replica area, only about 75 yds east of us. Emily was very interested in watching them upright the damaged aircraft.

I had to get my dander up a little when a RV-4 pilot came in and parked next to me while I was away. He didn't properly tie down his aircraft, so I contacted the line crew. They came over and retied the aircraft with their stakes and ropes. When the owner came back, I was there waiting to give him some instructions and what I thought of his lack of safety for others. The owner at first just laughed it off, but then realized



that I was somewhat pissed as I kept explaining what he had done was downright inconsiderate of others, and his stupidity endangered other aircraft.

I didn't mind if he was at some remote site and let his aircraft get upended by a storm, but when he was at an airport, especially OSH, there is a lot of considerations needed to keep his aircraft off of mine. He hadn't tied the tail down at all, and his "rope" on the wings was 1/4" clothesline, with a single tent stake around 6 inches long holding the wings down. He had just come in for the day, and left that evening, with an ear full of my "recommendations" of where he should stuff his rope. It still amazes me that many pilots are so stupid as proper procedures that should be used when securing an aircraft at OSH. I recommended to the line crew that they should tack on a \$100 fee for idiots like this pilot. They agreed but said impractical due to policies that would have to be implemented. Hopefully none of our crew would be this dumb!

Tom, Emily and "Bear"

Confession of a chicken pilot

-Doug

Those of us of a certain age look forward to our high school class reunions.



Now it is a known fact that all of our friends

seem to look so old and Jean and I haven't changed a bit in the last 45 years (well, maybe I am stretching things a little but it makes me feel better).

We have attended just about every reunion since our 1967 graduation so we were looking forward to the 45th which was scheduled for the first part of August. Of course we planned to fly the new RV-7 over to Michigan for the big party. 22DW now had about 90 hours on it and seemed to be running fine. My ever faithful first officer was tied up with work which prevented a Friday departure so our plan was to fly over to Pontiac on Saturday morning to arrive in plenty of time for the gathering that evening. Total time en route is about 4 hours with a planned stop in Aurora, IL (no, I don't fly over the lake unless I have two BIG turbine engines and 5 flight attendants on board).

Saturday in Minnesota dawned clear and perfect. Checking the weather computer, all was great down to the Chicago area but things started to fall apart rapidly in southern Michigan. A pesky, slow moving low pressure was spinning over Lake Huron and PTK was hovering at 400 overcast with all stations through lower Michigan reporting the same. The TAF predicted improvement by 1100.

After spending a sobering sum of money on avionics in the RV-7, 22DW is essentially equipped to easily handle weather like this. The PIC has thousands of hours in nasty weather and is current and qualified. We assumed the weather would improve by our arrival (around noon) and give a little more margin for error. I hesitated to launch until I could definitely see a trend of improvement. Well, we waited.. and waited and the ceiling stayed stuck at 400 feet. Our no-go departure time from 21D was noon in order to make the party on time. But I waffled and waffled some more throughout the morning. I have to confess I am not 100% comfortable flying a small single engine over a 400 foot ceiling. Guess I am spoiled after 20 years of flying big aluminum tubes. So we (or I) chickened out at noon and canceled the trip (all the DAL flights were full anyway).

We ended up flying up to Madeline Island and had a great day. Maybe the 50th reunion will have better weather (assuming my walker will fit in the baggage bin!!)

Minnesota Wing – Van’s Air Force
65 15th Ave. SW
New Brighton, MN 55112-3454

First Class

Twin Cities RV Builders Fall Family Picnic and Fly-In

Saturday, September 22, 2012, eatin’ starts at noon

**Sky Harbor Air Park (1MN8)
N44 31.7, W093 19.5, FGT (115.7) 218 degree radial, 9.0 nm, CTAF: 122.9
Cass Trail, Webster, MN 55088**



September is not September without our annual Fall Picnic and Fly-in. Our location is the same as last year and our hosts Kim and Roy Fuhrmann and the Sky Harbor folks welcome you and your family. Please bring a salad or dessert to share. Fly-ins welcome!! Unicom on 122.9

Details on the website at www.mnwing.org

Directions:

Minneapolis, south on I-35. Exit at the Elko, New Market exit. East on Cty Rd 2 then south on Cty From Rd 46. Then west on Cty Rd 3. You will cross I-35. Take the second entrance to Sky Harbor (Cass Trail). Follow the driveway to the Fuhrmann’s on the left. You can’t miss it!

If lost, please call Doug at 651-398-1184