



RVator's Log

Newsletter of the Twin Cities RV Builder's Group

December 2017

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Upcoming Events

December 9 - Twin Cities RV Builders April Meeting.
Lake Elmo Airport, MN.

See page 8.

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**Minnesota Wing
Van's Air Force**

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Shop Notes

- Doug

This past summer Jean and I took a great RV trip to Santa Fe. The weather was great. No screaming headwinds and 22DW ran like a Swiss watch. I had done some research prior to the trip and saw that the Santa Fe airport was home to two competing FBOs: Jet Center and Signature Flight Support. According to AirNav, Jet Center had rave reviews for courtesy and outstanding service. And... we all know what a bad rap Signature has had for high prices and snooty service. When we go on a trip, I always make every attempt to get the RV in a hangar. My philosophy is that I didn't spend 5 years of labor and a BIG pile of money to have my pride and joy pummeled by a summer hailstorm. So I called Jet Center and asked about hangar space. No problem, the young lady said on the phone. We'll be glad to have you for \$90 a night. Hmm... five nights... that's going to add up I thought. I said thanks... I'll get back to you and called Signature. I was expecting even worse. The nice young lady who answered the phone said they would be happy to have us for \$35 a night. Wow... so are there any other fees? How about fuel price? No other fees and gas was \$4.50 a gallon. I'm used to the \$30 ramp fee and \$8.00 a gallon fuel at the Signature in Rochester. We'll give 'em a try.



Our Chinese friend Domi on her first RV ride!

So a few days later we land at SAF and taxi up to the Signature ramp. The guys come out with the rental car and the red carpet, help with the bags, agree to roll the airplane into the hangar shortly, and we are gone in 15 minutes. A week later we return to leave and they tell me they misquoted the hangar fee. It's really \$30 a night! Packing up the -7, we taxi out and depart with nothing but praise for Signature at Santa Fe!

Flying via RV is SO nice compared to airline travel. A recent article in the New York Times talks about the "Incredible Shrinking Airline Seat." Spirit Airlines, with its 28-inch seat pitch (30 is the "norm") at least is honest calling itself the "cozy airline." The only way I tolerated 20 years of airline travel was being able to fly the jet.

We know the drill:

parking hassles, TSA goons, take off your shoes, run to the gate, line up like cattle, and relish in one's 28-inches of comfort.

A couple weeks ago I am cleaning closets and come across an old, old suitcase that belonged to my late father-in-law. Why I never opened this before I don't know. Rummaging through old photos, newspapers, and what not, I run across documents of an airline trip he made after WWII in October of 1947. He was an engineer for a company in Michigan and this journey



was to travel first to New York, then Stockholm, and then on to Warsaw, Poland. He went by train to New York and via SAS (Scandinavian Airlines) the rest of the way in a brand new, high tech Douglas DC-4. He wrote a letter home and allow me to quote a part of that note:

“Dear Mom and Dad:

Arrived in Warsaw, Poland today at 11:20 am. Had a wonderful trip. Didn't get airsick a bit. I spent about 23 ½ hours in the air from New York and we stopped in Gander, Newfoundland, Glasgow, Scotland, Oslo, Norway, and then Stockholm, Sweden. In Stockholm I had to stay overnight and get another plane here to Warsaw, which takes another 4 hours or about 850 miles. We flew to Stockholm in a big plane what had 44 seats but there were only 28 of us on board, but we had a lot of freight. The plane was a DC-4. I think we had the best pilot, his name is Captain King, he is Swedish-American and he handled that big plane like a toy. It was so foggy when we landed in Oslo, you couldn't see a thing and he put that ship down as easy as if you set it down with your fingers.”

He goes on to tell of his experiences in post-war-torn Warsaw with the city still in shambles. In looking through more brochures of his trip, I found this page telling all about the DC-4 (check out the “comfort features” on the right)

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THE four-engine Douglas DC-4 is the airplane that pioneered the skyways of the world, pushed America's network of airlines past continental boundaries and made global travel fast, dependable and safe. The airlines of the world waited patiently throughout the war years until the day they could acquire these proven airplanes and put them at the disposal of the traveling public. Today the Douglas DC-4, proven in four years of war and veteran of thousands of crossings over the North Atlantic and the wide Pacific, is at your service.

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The real shocker was the tickets. Roundtrip airfare from LGA to Stockholm was \$848.60. The round-trip from Stockholm to Warsaw was \$117.80. Translating that to 2017 dollars the total airfare was \$10,370.69!!!! A round-trip on Delta today is about \$800. So I guess the bottom line is that today's airline travel is REALLY cheap compared to 70 years ago. The downside is those 28 inches!! But I'd rather fly the RV!!!!

* * * * *

MN Wing Newsline

- Doug

RV-7A builder Frank Huber is putting the finishing touches on his machine. The wings have been fitted and last I saw he was rassing with our old nemesis fiberglass working on the various fairings. The first engine start will be coming up pretty soon with an initial flight hopefully by the end of the year.

Over at **Fleming Field, Bob Collins** has just received the fuselage kit for his RV-12.

Pete Howell had planned a trip out to Glacier Park this summer in his RV-9A. Unfortunately he and his wife Andi had to turn back after encountering bad weather and then smoke from the wildfires that literally covered the western U.S. In fact Glacier Park was closed the following day of his aborted trip so he didn't feel quite so bad. There is always next year.

Several MN Wingers made the trip south to York, NE to view the eclipse back in August. The weather was a little iffy around here but once they got out of Minnesota it was partly cloudy for viewing the big event. There were lots of deviations around weather on the return but all arrived safe and sound by sunset. If you hang in there a while, a total eclipse will pass right over Minnesota in 2099. I've got it on my calendar!

Our resident **transition instructor Tom Berge** was busy all summer with training and also doing pre-buy inspections just about all over the country. There always seems to be someone out there looking for a ready-built RV although the market is tight (that's a good thing.... people hang on to their RVs!)

Keeping one's cool

- Scott Flandermeyer from Van's Air Force

The Falcon RV squadron out of Peachtree City, GA launched a 6+1 formation to KCUB to join EAA Chapter 242's solar eclipse party. This would be an exciting day-- little did we know.



Nearing the halfway point I hear on our enroute frequency:

- "Threes got an **engine** failure".

Lead: "seriously?"

Reply: "Greese is **engine** out".

Being the +1 of this formation, I'm 1 mile in trail watching this all unfold.

N628GR had suffered a catastrophic case **failure** with **engine** seizure and was deadsticking from 7500ft into rural SC. We were flying above a scattered layer, so the entire flight disappeared quickly as they followed him down. The next few minutes were very tense.

Then the call comes up—"down safe!" Relief!! He had deadsticked onto a small county road surrounded by trees and rough fields--safely--not a scratch.



Now how do you help someone in an area you're not familiar with- a very smart young man in another plane used Foreflight and a map program to find the county road and call 911. When the call dropped, 911 replied with a text, he sent back the location via text. Help was on the way.



Before continuing to KCUB, I made one last pass and saw that two police cars and fire trucks were on the scene--He was in good hands. Meanwhile, one squadron member diverted to Augusta, picked up a rental car, retrieved our downed airman and passenger, and I stopped at KDNL on the way back to return all members to base before the day ended. Mission accomplished.

N628GR was transported via flatbed and now sits tied down at S19 unharmed except a severely cracked **engine** case.

Greese did a fabulous job!

Postscript: The engine was new ECI IO-371 with less than 500 hours. Crankshaft is in 2 pieces and one counterweight is no longer attached to it. Either the crank broke first or the counterweight flange on the crank broke first---#4 rod is in 2 pieces. The pilot was Greg Reese.

Van's Safety Corner 7-8-2011



As indicated in my last installment, the May issue of SPORT AVIATION did include a feature about Mike Seager and his very successful RV transi-

tion training program. Hopefully, highlighting the benefits of such training will help to inspire many more instructors, with RVs or otherwise, to offer similar training. It is demonstratively the single best means of reducing A-B aircraft acci-

dents. I also hope that EAA will very aggressively promote and support such efforts.

The EAA website includes a section under the heading of "PROGRAMS, GOVERNMENT ADVOCACY" which I encourage you to visit from time to time.

The FAA/Industry Aviation Safety Coalition is still in its organizational stage and will hold its next meeting in Oshkosh during the Airventure event. I plan to attend and will report to you afterwards.

"WE DON'T NEED MORE REGULATIONS"

This sounds like a typical comment that you might hear during any pilot's bull session. The person I heard this from during a phone conversation about a month ago was Mel Cintron, head of the FAA GA Division. He had called me regarding something in my Safety columns that had come to his attention. We had a pleasant conversation about Amateur Built aircraft safety and shared thoughts on means of reducing accidents. From his tone, the oft-referenced "Heavy Hand" of the FAA was completely absent. His feeling is that much more can be accomplished through a collaborative effort than through more burdensome regulations. This is refreshing, and helps explain the reason for establishing the Amateur Built Aircraft Safety Coalition consisting of FAA, EAA, AOPA, and industry members. Involving players from across the GA spectrum is important, but more important will be involvement of everyone in the field---YOU. Mr. Cintron and the FAA members of the coalition feel strongly that A-B safety can be improved through the use of positive efforts rather than punitive. The FAA's job is that of safety... period. If they do their job well and safety improves, they will have the satisfaction of a job well done and maybe a good job performance review. For us, it means that more of us will live longer. So, who has the most to gain?

NTSB VISIT

We at Van's were visited by a small delegation from the NTSB on June 6th. This visit was strictly information gathering in nature. We showed them how we manufacture kits and how we generate and circulate change notices and safety bulletins. That sort of thing. We found that our thinking was very similar. They indicated that they might be taking a more active role in some A-B accident investigations. Usually this is a function of the FAA, who provides the findings on which the NTSB reports are based. The purpose would be to study trends among "types" of kit-built aircraft.

HOW TO FLY/HOW NOT TO FLY:

One feature of this article is a discussion of how to fly a specific portion of a landing pattern in high wind conditions. It

is my hope that such discussions will cause you to re-visit this phase of flight and attempt to better understand all factors involved. I would appreciate feedback if you find this to be right, wrong, helpful, or otherwise. I would welcome similar contributions from instructors or experienced pilots; contributions which can benefit many. Much of what has been included in these articles was general in nature. In the future, I hope to concentrate more on specific of how to fly better.

PREFACE:

Please pardon my repetition; that of re-printing the paragraph below. Whether we want to admit it or not, we as social beings are affected by our surroundings and our peers. While we may be self-proclaimed "rugged individualists", chances are that we are also creatures of our culture to a high degree. Awareness of this can help us understand our own flying behavior and that of our fellow pilots, and the positive or negative role that flying culture can play.

CULTURE

1. We need to develop a Safety Culture. Though it seems that we are constantly bombarded with safety warnings and education opportunities by the FAA, EAA, and AOPA, is it really enough? Most of us also have a social engagement associated with our flying. We mingle with our flying friends at the airport, our EAA chapter, and the Saturday-morning-breakfast-bunch. These social contacts are probably our most powerful peer pressure influence. This less formal social side of aviation is the most enjoyable, and probably the most influential. This is our aviation "culture".
2. "Culture must change". A quote by Doug Rozendaal, with regard to improving A-B safety. This is obviously a comment that needs to be qualified. Overall, we have a great culture. We have common interests in flying and building, we help each other in many aspects of building, and we enjoy socializing with each other. But, there are aspects of our flying culture, perhaps holdovers from bygone years, perhaps results of paranoia over our minority status in GA, which are counterproductive to safety. Keep this in mind as you read on.

ANTI-AUTHORITY.

During the FAA Safety meeting in Florida a couple of months ago, one of the panel members suggested that he had noted an anti-authority thread in the A-B community. Not everyone felt the same, and the topic was not further discussed. However, I've thought about it and believe that this sentiment may be more pervasive in the A-B community than elsewhere in GA. I think that homebuilders are more independent and creative than typical pilots. They are willing to put in the effort to do it their own way, and are more resistant to being told what to do. There may be an element of

anti-authority also, and in some instance this can be destructive. Keep that though in mind while reviewing A-B flying safety.

ACCIDENT REDUCTION:

I mentioned before that we (EAA and A-B community) should set a goal of cutting our A-B accident rate in half. (The goal stated by the FAA was much less, something in the order of a 1% per year improvement) I feel that this is achievable because a review of individual accidents shows that almost all of them are preventable. If accidents are not an act of God such as physical incapacitation in flight, being hit from behind, or being struck by lightning, they are preventable. To prevent loss of control accidents, we need to hone our flying skills. To prevent cowboy accidents, we simply must quit doing show-off stunts. To minimize mechanical problems, we need to become better builders and mechanics. As pilots, we must manage mechanical systems (fuel starvation?) better.

OK, easier said than done. What should be our time frame for this goal; one year or five years? One year is probably unrealistically soon; probably unachievable so why try? five years seem so distant that there's no need to rush; lets put off action until later. My suggestion is "ACT NOW". When an opportunity arises, act. By thinking "safety", you'll be surprised how often a need, hopefully an opportunity, to act will arise.

HOW?

1. Constantly assess and upgrade yourself. Regularly practice airwork maneuvers. Practice landings of different types rather than just "arriving". Make it a point to do something educational on every flight. Make Biennial Flight Reviews (BFR) meaningful. Seek out an instructor who will challenge and instruct you, not just sign your logbook.
2. Bring safety into conversations with fellow pilots. Promote an atmosphere of professionalism within your flying peer group, be it EAA Chapter meetings or just the clutch at the airport cafe.
3. Encourage builders who are about to make first flights to get transition training, or at least to upgrade their proficiency.
4. If it is evident that some pilot (s) you know are deficient in flying skills or judgement, network with fellow pilots to find diplomatic means to make that pilot aware of his limitations and the need for more training, practice, etc.
5. If you know of someone about to buy a "previously owned" RV or other homebuilt, do what you can to make that person aware of the availability and benefits of transition training.

The list should be endless. Give it some thought and see what is appropriate for your aviation environment; your

EAA Chapter or peer group. Different circumstances will present differing opportunities and needs. I'd like to hear from anyone who has specific experience and ideas of what they feel is needed or what has worked in their area.

EXPERIMENTING

Reducing accidents can be done through reducing risk. Reducing risk is done through eliminating variables and unknowns. Experimenting inherently involves unknowns and variables, thus risk. Our airplanes are licensed EXPERIMENTAL- Amateur Built, and our organization is the EXPERIMENTAL Aircraft Association. Safety and experimentation appear to be at cross-purposes. From a strict safety perspective it would seem logical to conclude that we should cease experimenting. Or, might safer airplanes be made as a result of experimenting?

In attempting to answer the unanswerable, I'll just suggest that when we builders engage in experimentation we thoroughly research the possible effects and consequences, good and bad, of our intended experiments. Experimentation might involve changes to airframes, engines, engine accessories, fuel systems, etc. Experiment wisely and cautiously. Keep experimentation separate from routine flying. Do not involve others (passengers) in flights where experimentation is in process.

WHY IS IT THAT SOME PEOPLE DON'T LIKE OUR AIRPLANES?

We have a fleet of wonderful airplanes. They are pretty, have great performance, handle well---what's not to like? Yet, over the years I have heard comments expressing reservations about our airplanes or the way they are seen to fly. Those damned RVs!----a comment I occasionally hear.

One Saturday morning a few weeks ago I joined a number of other pilots in an impromptu breakfast fly-in at a nearby airport with an adjacent café. The bulk of the planes, about 6 in number, departed together for the same home airport destination. The first to depart took off short, climbed steep, and initiated his turn out of traffic at no more than 200 ft. high and near the center of the runway length. The others followed suite. The two or three of us still on the ramp were chatting with a long time friend who hangared at that airport. He frowned upon seeing these non-standard departures and commented on the adverse effect this would have on the residents of the homes that had just been flown over by these low departees. Like most airports, they have noise sensitive neighbors who they (airport management) were trying to accommodate. Along with other efforts, they had placed signs on the departure ends of the runways requesting pilots to avoid noise sensitive areas.

This was not a particularly newsworthy event, and I mention it here only because I think that there may be a lesson here for many of us. Since all of these pilots, from the same home airport, flew the same irregular departure pattern, does this say something about "culture"? Since there were signs at the departure point requesting noise abatement compliance, does this say something about "anti-authority"? "Those rules weren't meant for me". Or, is it just a matter of thoughtless indifference? Again, while I don't mean to make a federal case of this, I do feel that little things like this can lower our stature in the eyes of our fellow pilots, and the stature of all private pilots in the eyes of our airport neighbors.

Several weeks later I was again at that airport for breakfast along with the same basic group of pilots. Again, the departures were non-standard with most turn-outs initiated at less than 100 ft. above the runway. One STOL airplane (not an RV) even took off on a short taxiway, across the active runway, and right over the homes adjacent to the airport. Why don't they like us? Well, duh!

I know, I've often heard comments such as "If they don't like airplane noise, why did they buy a house near an airport?" Case closed! No, not really. The reality is that there ARE homes near airports and that people ARE going to continue living in those homes. Regardless of why they chose to live there, they have a right to expect reasonable consideration from pilots, and an expectation that pilots will fly prescribed, safe, traffic patterns.

Recently I received an E-mail from retired professional flight instructor. Having noted the high number of RV stall/spin accidents in FAA and NTSB files, he approached some of the RV pilots at his home airport. He found that many were hot dogs with know-it-all attitudes, and unwilling to listen to any of his suggestions regarding their questionable flying skills or manners.

Recently I learned that a member of our glider club had been banned from using the club's private airfield because of his flying behavior. He owned an RV and would fly in to use the club gliders. He often demonstrated his own stylized arrival procedure. I witnessed one of these industrial strength buzz jobs, and agreed that corrective attention was in order. I mention this as an instance where peer pressure was applied effectively. The club's *culture* simply wouldn't accept reckless flying.

* In the June 2011 issue of FLYING there were a number of letters-to-the-editor commenting on columnist Martha Lunkin's previous article criticizing the behavior and attitudes of many Warbird members. One respondent wrote: "*Martha, you showed some big, brass ovaries taking on the "Council of Warbirdia."* Thanks, because you are not alone in your opinion. Mind if I add a quite a few members of various RV air forces to your potshot list?"

"Ouch"! My initials are RV, and most of you are proud members of the RV community. It hurts when all of our collective efforts and talents are negated because of the conduct of some in our community. Unfortunately, this is nothing new. As long as there have been RVs, as long as there have been airplanes, some pilots and groups of pilot have exempted themselves from the need to fly in an accepted manner. I think that now more notice is being paid (to irregular flying practices) because of our awareness of the decline and fragility of personal flying, and the need to do everything possible to improve our safety record and strengthen our public image. Within GA, our RVs attract more attention because of their appearance and because of their slightly higher engine noise. That attention can result in either positive or negative impressions. It's up to you.

The majority of the many RV pilots in my area do fly in a safe, sane, and considerate manner. In general I think that they are accepted and respected by their GA peers. I believe this is true for the remainder of our country. Keep setting a good example and try to minimize our "bad press". Do what you can to impress upon others the need to do the same.

OK, while bad flying manners do not fall in the same safety category as such things as low-level aerobatics, it certainly deserves our attention. Give a little thought to the way you and your fellow RV pilots fly and behave around airports. Try to see yourselves as others see you. If this causes a reflection you don't like, do something about it.

HOW TO FLY/HOW NOT TO FLY (to be continued in next installment)

As you might be able to understand, spare time is been in short supply during this time of year. I need a bit more time to draw some illustrations for this feature. I will close here for now and have another installment ready next issue.

Van

Deegan's Ride

-Doug

In September Jean and I flew the RV over to Pontiac, Michigan to attend our 50th high school reunion. The weather for the weekend was perfect and we had a great time at the party mingling with all of these old folks who claimed they went to our high school back in 1967.

The return trip on Sunday again was blessed with perfect weather. From Pontiac it is about a 50-50 tossup flying around Chicago or up through northern Michigan back to Lake Elmo (sorry folks, I'm too chicken to fly toy airplanes across Lake Michigan.)

But our first task was to make the short hop from Pontiac to Lapeer, Michigan to give my grandnephew his first airplane ride. Deegan is 5 years-old going on 22. He is al-

most scary smart. He reads at a 2nd grade level, knows all about the solar system and will probably be an astrophysicist at 18. We strap him into the right seat and I crank up the machine. He looks at the Garmin G5 in front of him and immediately pipes up, "Uncle Doug, we can't go yet because there's no GPS." Hmm... he's right. The Garmin is waiting to lock on and there is a "NO GPS" warning.



I explain that and he seems pretty satisfied. We taxi out to runway 36 and he jabbers relentless in his excitement. We take off and we head northwest out over town. "Uncle Doug, we are heading northwest. If we turn to the left we'll be going south." Hmm.. he's right. We circle around town for 20 minutes and all the time he knows exactly which direction we are going. He wants to fly and I let me hold the stick (a little too hard because I finally have to tell him to back off so I can actually make the landing.) We're back on the ramp and after shutting down, I tell his dad Tom that most adults I take flying have know no idea where we are or which direction we are going. He says, "Oh, I always tell him which direction we are going when we are driving and he seems to always have it figured out."

We have a fun but short visit with the rest of the family and before long, it's time to depart for home. I tell Tom he'd better start saving for flying lessons! I just love giving rides!!!!!!

Twin Cities RV Builders Group
 12 Island View Lane
 North Oaks, MN 55127

First Class

Twin Cities RV Builders December Meeting

Saturday, December 9, 2017, 10:00 am
Doug and Paul's hangar, 41C Mooney Lane, Lake Elmo Airport

It's time for an RV Town Hall meeting!! Or maybe we'll just call it an RV Round Table. Regardless, bring your questions, comments, opinions (hmm.. easy now!) or whatever and we'll open things and we'll solve all of the RV world's problems. We'll have a list of topics posted to get the ball rolling. What RV should I build? Maybe I should just buy a ready built one? How about shop space, tools, techniques, paint jobs, avionics, test flying, transition training, vacation flying, maintenance. Why we might even throw caution to the winds and talk about PRIMERS!!!

As usual we'll have coffee, juice, and a pleasing assortment of Christmas-time goodies to munch on.

See you there!!!!!! **BTW, please park on the hard surface.**

Questions... Doug at 651-398-1184 or dcw@mnwing.org

