

OCTOBER 2008

SPORT *Aerobatics*

SPECIAL MAGAZINE OF THE INTERNATIONAL AEROBATIC CLUB

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Walter Extra's Extra 330SC cavorting over the Wisconsin countryside. Photo by Bonnie Kratz.

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Reggie S. Paulk

LETTER from the EDITOR

by Reggie Paulk

I'm Going to Oshkosh

In the world of aviation, Oshkosh and AirVenture are nearly interchangeable with aircraft and flying. For the 16 years I've been an aviator, it has always been a dream of mine to visit those hallowed grounds in Wisconsin. A few days before EAA AirVenture Oshkosh 2008, a phone call brought the dream to reality.

The voice on the other end of the line belonged to David Hipschman, and he told me of an opportunity to visit Oshkosh this year. There was a plane ticket, hotel, and car with my name on it. The only catch was that I had to leave on Sunday, which was only four days away. He gave me the opportunity to discuss the trip with my wife and told me to call him back when I reached a decision. When I came to, I called my wife, and she happily encouraged me to take him up on the offer.

As you may know, the International Aerobic Club has been searching for a new editor for *Sport Aerobatics* since Scott Westover left the publication to pursue other ventures. Long after I thought the opportunity had passed, Mr. Hipschman's call renewed my hopes. All I had to do was get to AirVenture and prove myself to Vicki Cruse and Lisa Popp during the ensuing week. Little did I know the daunting task I faced.

For those of you who've never been to AirVenture, it's big. I've

heard many tales from people who said it would take years of attending the event to actually see everything. For the first two days, I decided to take those people to task and tried my hardest to see as much as I could. All I have to say is that my 32-year-old hips felt like they were three times that age—and I hadn't even seen a tenth of what was there to discover. I quickly found my new home at the IAC building and, for

Some of the best stories come from the most unlikely places, and I'd love to hear from you.

the remainder of the week, healed my hips, uncovered stories, and made new friends who I hope to see again next year.

I've convinced Vicki and Lisa to give me a chance, but now I face my biggest challenge: you. As your new editor, I encourage you to speak up and let me know what works and what doesn't. Some of the best stories come from the most unlikely places, and I'd love to hear from you. I truly appreciate the opportunity I've been given to serve you. ☺

Please submit news, comments, articles, or suggestions to: reggie.paulk@gmail.com

PRESIDENT'S PAGE

by Vicki Cruse • IAC 22968
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AirVenture the Awesome

Another amazing year to be in Oshkosh

Oshkosh has become a yearly tradition for many because there is no place on earth that creates an all-out aviation environment like this. We really thought this was going to be an off year for Oshkosh, (it's still Oshkosh to me, but it's also known as AirVenture to you latecomers), but it certainly wasn't. This was the first year I arrived early, and I was shocked at the number of people wandering around the grounds on the Sunday before opening. The die-hards and the early birds were out in force. Campers started arriving weeks in advance to get "their" spot on the site.

Early arrivals included IAC Advanced pilot Vicky Benzing in her Boeing 450 Stearman and Rand Siegfried and his son in a Piper Pacer. They flew in from California along with four other airplanes, and three of the six pilots in command in this group were teenagers. Vicky and Rand flew out en masse with Rand's daughter, McKinley, who was solo in her Legend Cub, another friend whose 17-year-old son flew out in the family 172, and a 19-year-old in a Piper Archer. They left a week early, camping along the way and having a ball, but not without a few "happenings." They landed at more than one airport with no fuel, despite calls made ahead of time, and transferred fuel from one plane to another using water bottles so they could get to an alternate airport (see <http://Sites.Google.com/site/oshkosh2008/Home>).

The IAC area was busier than ever, with new planes and the usual mass

of Pitts Model 12s that dominate the IAC area and attract a lot of attention. Joining them was the MXS and the single-place Sbach 300. Jim Taylor was the conductor of the orchestra of airplane placement and did a fabulous job. With the efforts of Jean Taylor, the IAC building was well-staffed, including a new area at KidVenture where a Christen Eagle took center stage. Kids had their pictures taken with IAC "celebrities" like David Martin, Chandy Clanton, and Debby Rihm-Harvey.

Lisa was kind enough to forgo the traditional brats, cabbage, and cheese for the buffet.

The IAC forums continue to be a popular item in the mornings, and the forums tent became a great place to converge for the afternoon air show.

The IAC building was hopping this year. Lisa Popp, our executive director, really outdid herself with merchandise selections. In fact, we had to reorder a couple of items on Tuesday. You'll be seeing blowout specials on old and new merchandise appearing in the magazine beginning this month.

The IAC member dinner was the biggest it has been in years. Thank-

fully, the tent next to us was unoccupied and allowed for spillover seating next door. Lisa was kind enough to forgo the traditional brats, cabbage, and cheese for the buffet, as this local cuisine was prevalent on-site. It was great to see so many IAC people in one place. The aerobatic talk lasted well into the night—long after the well went dry.

This year also saw a record number of international visitors who arrived to find a very favorable exchange rate; in other words, America is on sale. David Pilkington, an IAC member from Australia, worked the IAC building (and KidVenture) a few days for us. The Aussies were out in full force, with a couple of guys each buying six Pitts T-shirts to take home to friends.

Why make the yearly pilgrimage? You never know what you will see. One of the highlights was the Boeing Dreamlifter. What an impressive airplane. A few years ago we were treated to the Airbus Super Guppy, but the Dreamlifter was even more interesting due to its sheer size. Imagine a 747 chopped at the front and tail sections, where the entire middle section resembles a giant bratwurst, with little-to-no fairing between the sections. The plane was parked at AeroShell Square facing the main entrance and caused more than a few pedestrian accidents with people walking into each other while staring at it.

Thanks to all of you who made this year's Oshkosh one of the best IAC has ever had. Hope to see you next year. ☺

NEWSBRIEFS

CORRECTION: Last month we published a piece on Michael Church. The article said he was the only one holding both his Master CFI and Master CFI-Aerobatic designations. In 2003, Bill Cornick was the first to hold both designations, and retains them today.

IAC Boardmember Erica Simpson Lost in Fatal Crash at Reno

On September 6, 2008, Erica Simpson, formerly Erica Hoagland, was involved in a fatal accident as she was conducting a check flight in advance of competition at Reno. According to FAA spokesman Ian Gregor, her aircraft, a Cassutt IIIM *Little Lynn*, suffered a catastrophic structural failure as she was performing a roll during the flight. Simpson last competed in the race's biplane class in 2006, and this year was planning to fly in the Formula One class.

Erica was newly elected as the IAC Southwest Region Director in 2007, and was the Assistant Contest Director for the U.S. Nationals.

Erica was newly married to Kendal Simpson at AirVenture 2008. In an e-mail sent to the Acro exploder, he addressed his wife's passion for flying.

"We are comforted in the fact that she passed while doing what she loved to do and that she is in a much better place where her new wings will never fail," Kendal said. "Erica was very aware of the risks involved in her hobby and passion. She was intimately aware of the fact that the airplane she would be flying at Reno was highly experimental and that she would be a test pilot. Both of us accepted these risks and, while we never truly expected something like this to happen, we knew that it could."

Erica's family has been intimately involved in aviation since she was a little girl. An excerpt from her website explains the depth of their passion.

"Erica was born and raised in a small town along the south shore of Lake Superior. Her father made EAA Oshkosh Fly-In their family vacation every year since

1979. She is the first aerobatic pilot in the family and a third generation pilot." (riraaerobatics.com)

After graduating from Embry-Riddle in 1997, Erica went on to earn a master's degree in aeronautical science. Over the next 10 years, she amassed more than 7000 flight hours as a flight instructor in everything from single- and multi-engine airplanes to gliders. Her latest job was as the captain on a Citation Jet, but her love of small biplanes was apparent.

"Flying the Citation jet is luxurious," said Simpson, "But it is no match for the fun, loud, hot-in-the-summer, cold-in-the-winter, small airplane like the Pitts!"

Erica's passion for aviation inspired her to encourage others toward the gift of flight, and her family has set up a scholarship in her name.

"We ask that you please continue her legacy," says her family, "by educating and exciting others to follow their dreams, take flight, and live life to its fullest potential. This would have made Erica the happiest and doing so would give her great honor."

Encouraging people not only to dream, but to take action toward their dreams was very important to Erica. Kendal Simpson used a quote from his wife to sum up his feelings.

"...live the life you want to live, fly your own path, follow your desires! America is the best country to live in, allowing us to be successful in our personal paths if we choose to. I believe that success is not determined by our careers, but whether we live our lives the way we have wanted to. Try for something you love and take the chance of regretting it later, rather than regret not trying for it at all. Onward and Upward!"



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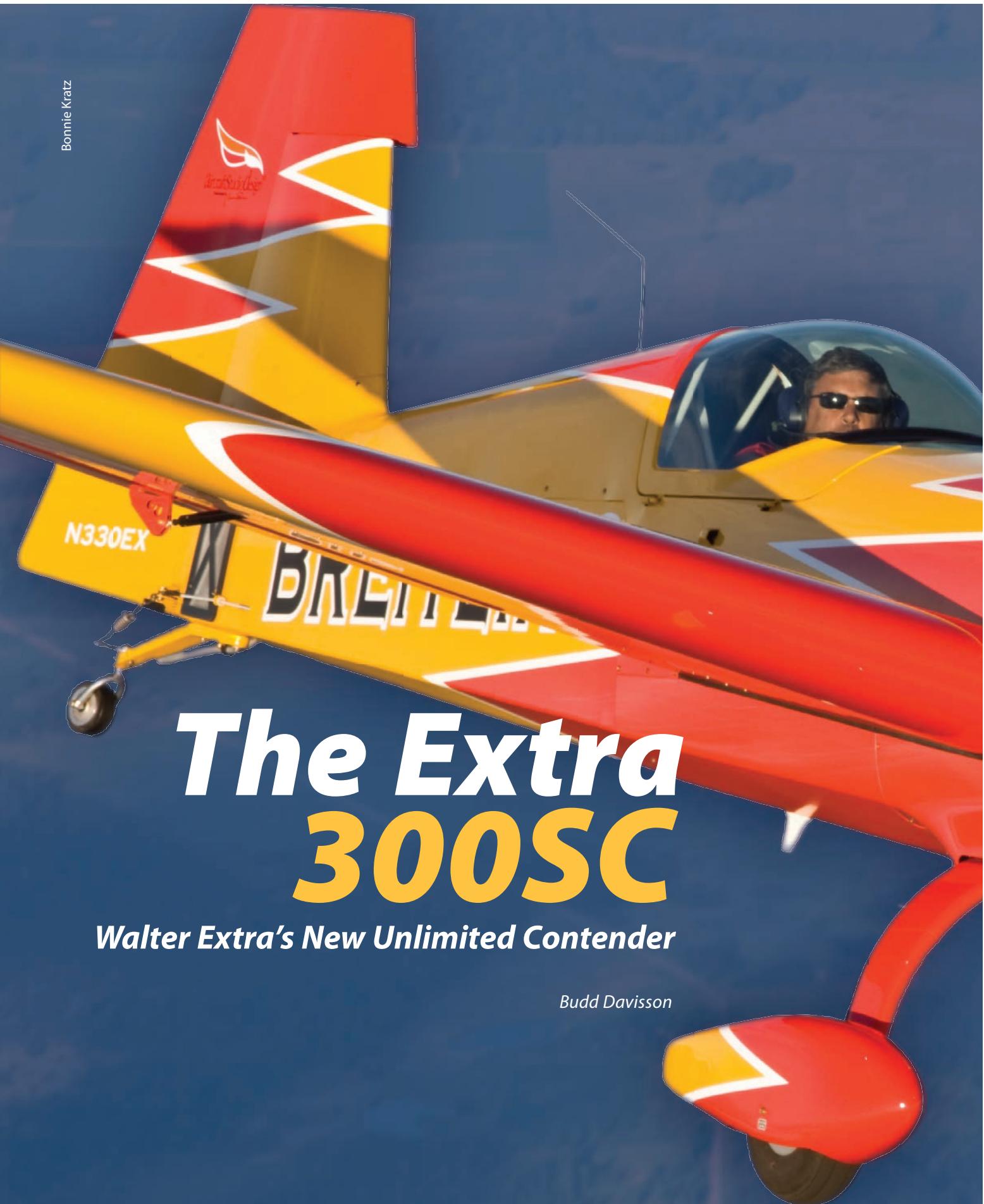
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Bonnie Kratz



The Extra 300SC

Walter Extra's New Unlimited Contender

Budd Davisson

At the pointy end of the aerobatic totem pole—the Unlimited category—winning is measured in micro-points, and this week's killer competition airplane is next week's also-ran. It's an increasingly brutal arena in which the dance steps demanded by the choreographer would leave old Count Aresti breathless with astonishment. And it doesn't appear likely that the trend toward extreme performance from both the airplane and the pilot will let up anytime soon.

The recent drive to design aircraft that clearly outdistance the pack has forged a razor-edged competition between the various airplanes that are expected to successfully compete (read that as "win") in Unlimited competition. At the same time, an unlikely market has developed just outside of competition in which pilots who have the wherewithal to own the most recognized, butt-kicking aerobatic bird will buy one just like their hero flies even though they have no intention of ever competing in it. It is this group that actually forms a market base wide enough to support the development of a new airplane, and it is a market Walter Extra, he of the airplanes of the same name, knows well. He has created a small empire by understanding that, if he builds a winning airplane flown by well-known champions, he will sell many more of the nearly identical airplane to serious pilots who just want to own the best aircraft available.





Bonnie Kratz

The Extra 330SC is a definite departure from previous designs. The small canopy and redesigned tail are noticeable changes.

The operative word in the foregoing equation is “winning airplane.” He knows well that the adoration and financial attention will quickly shift focus once one design has been eclipsed by another. It wasn’t until his airplanes began to lose favor, and Kramer Upchurch of Southeast Aero in St. Augustine, Florida, and champion competitor and air show performer Mike Goulian laid it on the line to him, that he took up the challenge to update his Extra 300 series.

“Walter is an extremely creative guy,” Upchurch says. “But the company was focused on their corporate aircraft, the 400 and 500, and the 300S began to lose ground to the CAP 232 and the Edge 540. Serious competition pilots always buy the very best there is, and quite a number of top-level pilots left the Extra for a CAP or Edge.”

Upchurch and Goulian visited Extra in 2005, and Walter, himself a winning competition pilot, responded by diving into his 300S, working down the items that were on the Upchurch/Goulian wish list.

Pilots such as Mike Goulian had flown and competed in just about all of the existing Unlimited airplanes, and there was a wide consensus of opinion that the 300S was still a fine airplane. But if it was going to win Unlimited, some areas had to be addressed.

“Everyone wanted more roll rate,” Upchurch says, “which, considering that it already rolled at 330-350 degrees per second, shows just how demanding the competition market has become. However, it was more than just roll rate the pilots were looking for. They wanted the airplane to have more all-around maneuvering capabilities, particularly at lower airspeeds in the 60-knot range.”

“Pilots also wanted more vertical performance,” says Upchurch, “which sounds a little crazy considering how far it would go vertical already, but there were airplanes with more vertical performance, so, if Walter wanted to keep selling airplanes, his had to go higher for longer and still be rolling well when coming to a stop at the top.”

The competition guys were, in point of fact, becoming just a little spoiled and a tad blasé. With airplanes such as the Edge, Sukhoi, CAP, and Extra, the performance bar had been raised so high that incremental improvements were going to come slowly to an airplane such as an Extra

300S, but they expected it and they were willing to pay for it. And then the air show and freestyle parameters were stirred into the mix.

Kramer points out another wish list item that’s new to this generation of aerobatic pilots.

“The ability to tumble easily, predictably, and for longer periods of time has become an issue in recent years,” says Upchurch. “Where in the past any tumbling maneuver was just a novelty, they are now an aerobatic staple, and pilots—and audiences—expect them. Walter had to redesign his tail to make the airplane more aggressive in the way it tumbled.”

The concept of intentionally tumbling an airplane isn’t something that’s taught in aerodynamic classes. Not even in graduate school. In fact, tumbling is the antithesis of what an aeronautical engineer strives for. He wants smooth flow, stable handling, and, until very recently, couldn’t computer-model (or even imagine) what the forces were—and where they went—in an airplane that was being made to act in a dynamic fashion that was anything other than aerodynamic: Tumbling often reverses the forces on the airframe but in ways that still aren’t totally understood. Plus, a traditional engineer is going to have next to no experience—practical or theoretical—in what you have to design into an airplane to make it better at tumbling.

Much of what the engineering community knows about tumbling is empirical: Pilots figured out how to tumble the airplane in various ways and, when they broke something, the engineers had another data point to work with, which helped them in their design work. However, there aren’t many engineering types out there like Walter Extra who can tumble an airplane with the best of them. He came at the tumbling problem, as well as the other wish list improvements, from an entirely different perspective: He, more than most tech types, understood exactly what the market was saying it wanted and knew how to deliver it.

Walter had lots of ideas about how to attack the wish list, but central to everything was improving the power-to-weight ratio. That meant more motor and less weight. He had already begun using the AEIO-580 with 330 hp on tap. However, to put the horsepower to work in the

330SC, as the new design was called, he used a new prop from MT that was specifically designed to give more low-speed thrust. It had fatter, wider blades that were more efficient at putting the ponies on tap to work.

"When it comes to weight," says Upchurch, "Walter is fond of saying you lose it a gram at a time rather than pounds and kilos. But in this case, the grams removed total up to nearly 150 pounds lower than a 300S."

When shaving weight off of an aerobatic airplane, you don't just start using smaller this and lighter that. It must be done while keeping the ultimate strength in mind at all times. Nothing can be compromised. In the case of the 330SC's evolution from the 300S, the weight came off through the use of technology and careful planning. All push-pull tubes in the control system, for instance, are carbon fiber. The same carbon fiber concept is used on the wing ribs: Where once they were plywood, they are now carbon fiber. The firewall was lightened using titanium. The final airframe is rated at plus-and-minus 10 Gs, but loads to destruction show its limit actually exceeds 24Gs. Everywhere you look in the airframe there are new, state-of-the-art components.

The roll rate issue was tackled in a very non-Extra sort of way. The ailerons are hinged so that, when deflected past a certain amount, the leading edges protrude a sizable distance above or below the wing. In so doing, to those of us in the cheap seats, it appears that rather than acting like regular ailerons that generate lift by changing the camber of the wing, these create a slot effect. At large

deflections, this effect makes the aileron act as if it is a separate surface that generates lift on its own, independent of the wing. This is probably where the increased roll rate (430-450 degrees per second) gets its start.

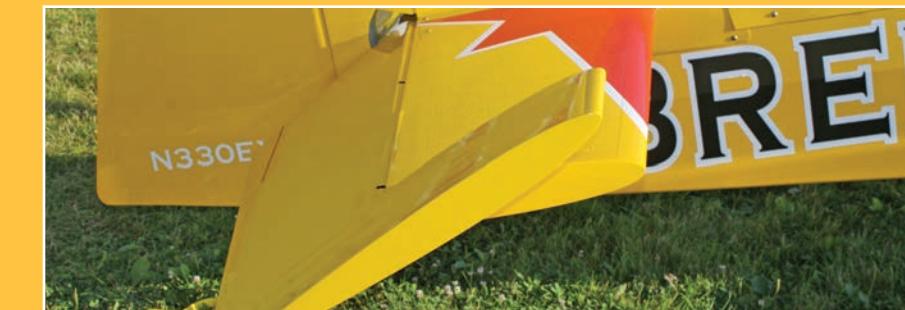
Although the new trapezoidal planform of the ailerons has to be pointed out to be noticeable, the unusual shape also helps in the roll rate department. Rather than being rectangular, as is traditional, the tips are quite a bit wider than the roots. It's our guess that by moving the center of pressure of the aileron outboard, it gains leverage and can, with less effort, more quickly move the wing. It's also worth noting that there isn't even a hint of an aileron shovels to be seen, although Upchurch indicated that for European Aviation Safety Agency certifications, the shovels will go back on.

An even more subtle change is seen in the taper of the wing. At the tip, the chord is much shorter, which, when combined with the new aileron, achieves the desired roll performance.

The art of tumbling is one thing. The art of figuring out how to make an airplane flop end over end in a more predictable manner has to be something of a black art, part of which includes making the airplane snap outside better. This Walter knew how to do, but some of those changes, notably the new horizontal tail, helped in both areas.

He went to slightly thinner airfoil sections with less radius on the nose. This made them more critical, so he could get them to stall more predictably. The span is shorter and the elevator balances are noticeably different.

Continued on page 12



From nose to tail, the new Extra 330SC incorporates changes that make it lighter and more maneuverable. Mechanically adjustable foot pedals and carbon fiber push rods save weight, while trapezoidal ailerons and new geometry on the tail improve rolling and tumbling maneuvers.

Photos by Budd Davisson and Craig VanderKolk

"Extra Extra! Read All About It!"

ONE MAN'S OPINION OF THE EXTRA 330 SC

Carl Pascarell

Doug Vayda, chief pilot for Southeast Aero, launched me in the SC with uncharacteristically subdued advice: "Don't have too much fun and don't hurt yourself too badly."

When you first approach the airplane, you get a sense of its performance while still 50 feet away. Simply put...big motor, little airframe. This is no doubt gonna be a monster. But no ogre this—oh no. The '580 is so elegantly cowled, the rest of the airplane just seems to flow back from it. The fit and finish are first-class, consistent with the established Extra tradition. This particular SC, with its Mirco Pecorari custom-designed paint scheme, dripped with performance potential and raw sex appeal.



Bonnie Kratz

Entering the cockpit is typically Extra: foot step on fuselage, stand up on seat, and wiggle your feet forward under the instrument panel and onto the rudders. Rudders on the SC are not electrically adjustable as on the other Extras. (Remember the weight thing?) Fortunately, the seat is three-way adjustable, allowing Patty Wagstaff-sized pilots as well as Doug Vayda-sized pilots an easy fit given two minutes and a couple of "pull pin" seat adjustments. To me (5 feet 10 inches, 180 pounds), the cockpit felt just about perfect: a definite "wearing the airplane" sort of impression without feeling cramped or jammed and just enough headroom to allow for the "negative G" stretch.

Several "consumable" but less than ideal ergonomic features were noted, however. For instance, when at idle, the throttle is located too far aft to reach easily. A bit awkward initially, but once the throttle is advanced at all, this ceases to be a factor. Secondly, the aileron push-pull tubes pass directly under the pilot's knees/calves and actually rub against those areas when the stick is pushed side to side. This is an issue for most average-sized individuals. Having said that, when in flight and particularly during maneuvering, it is scarcely noticeable and presents no impediment to control feel or response.

Finally, there is an electric pitch trim toggle switch located on the upper instrument panel. It's not convenient, and Doug assures me that on this and future examples the trim will be relocated to the stick, as with military fighters. Fortunately, because the airplane flies as if balanced close to the "neutral point," very little trim is required throughout the normal range of speeds. Still, I would prefer good old-fashioned manual trim in an airplane like this.

Engine start is straightforward and welcomes you with a jumping rumble under the hood reminiscent of a top fueler "nitro idling" on the starting line. The big '580, with its six-into-one exhaust, sends pulses of power through the airframe and into your body, adding to the airplane's already formidable presence. The taxi to the runway was expeditious in part due to the wide-blade MT dragging me along but also because of my eagerness to get airborne and explore this thoroughbred's awesome capabilities. The wind was light and variable with the temperature at 79 degrees, and the airplane was loaded with full "aerobatic" fuel: 25 gallons and empty wings.

Take-off acceleration was consistent with the current crop of high-powered competition machines, which is to say...exhilarating. I let the airplane fly off tail low and rotated to a truly ridiculous attitude in an attempt to hold what I figured was the best angle. Passing through 1,000 feet 14 seconds after liftoff—that's right, 14 seconds—I turned west out of the pattern only to realize I was still only halfway down the runway! As you might imagine, 3,000 feet came pretty quickly, and the flight to the practice area was 190-knots quick.

I have to admit, my initial impression was that the ailerons were heavier than I would have preferred. The very next flight I changed my mind. It was as if the ailerons got lighter. They didn't, of course, and upon reflection I think my sense of what I expected the airplane to be may have colored my assessment. I decided further that the airplane is meant to be flown aggressively. When flown as such, the roll axis seems just about right. In fact, the more aggressively one flies the airplane the more harmonized the controls seem.

Roll accelerations are extraordinarily high, generating rates in excess of 440 degrees per second with virtually no ramp-up. It's like...Move aileron...Get roll....Right now! Here's the kicker. A lot of airplanes roll like crazy. It's not that tough a thing to get them to do, but not all of them can be well controlled. Frankly, this has been an issue for me with many of the Extras I've flown. The ailerons are just too "bobbly" for my liking: no real center and, on some, an almost negative stick force gradient that makes precise roll control a chore until you get used to them. Well, fear not. The SC has set a new standard of roll control and authority for the Extras. In fact, with the possible exception of the old '230, it has the finest ailerons of any existing Extra. Crisp stops and lightning-fast starts are well controlled with very little practice. Four-point rolls up, down, or anywhere in between are a head-banging, gear-shaking, bang, bang, bang, bang affair. Would I like them to be a bit lighter? Probably, but I'm likely just being picky.

Overall, I felt the airplane's basic handling qualities were pretty well managed. Stick forces in pitch were fairly light. Somewhat lighter pulling than pushing, but that suits me just fine. Things such as rolling turns suffer just a bit because of it, but only at first. The difference, as they say in test pilot parlance, is "consumable"—that is, adequately manageable.

Snap rolls are quick and precise. Inside or out, up or down, single or multiple. This, I confess, I gleaned from watching the pros fly. Champions Patty Wagstaff and David Martin, each with virtually no time in the airplane, were snapping it as well as anything they've flown—as much a testament to their ability as the airplane's.

The subtleties of snap rolls and rollers are one thing, but to me, the truly impressive nature of the airplane is evident in the "wow" maneuvers. You know the "wow" maneuvers—10-roll torque rolls, double and triple nose-over-tail tumbles, knife-edge spins that you can barely hold onto, and tiny "micro loops" at 60 knots. These are the "YEE HA!" things that make the airplane so exhilarating and so memorable.

Having quickly gained confidence in the SC, my second flight was in the low-altitude practice box at the St. Augustine Airport in Florida. My flight was a chaotic mass (or *mess* as some would have it) of one-after-the-other, body-punishing attempts to do all I could in 20 minutes.

Vertical performance was exceptional, and I'm almost embarrassed to admit I actually pulled power from time to time to stay down in the box and keep from exceeding the 3,500-foot box ceiling and/or the 220 knot redline. Now that's precisely the type of problem I enjoy having in an airplane. I particularly liked the stability the airplane exhibited when stuck in the vertical. It was almost as if the airplane was flying with an "attitude hold" engaged. Once stuck there, very little attention was required to maintain the vertical. This was in part due to the low, off-speed trim requirement and was generally true for all lines and angles.

I tended to concentrate on vertical and point maneuvers if for no other reason than they are so well done by the SC. Vertical four points up, inside, outside, inside triple vertical eights or "snowmen," and the "how long is this gonna go on" torque

rolls were pushing me over the "too much fun limit" Doug had warned me about.

All high-alpha maneuvering was as well behaved and controllable as any aerobatic plane I've flown, the "micro loops" in particular. Starting at 60 knots and flown in full buffet with almost full aft stick, the roll and yaw axis throughout the loop were completely controllable with conventional control input, so much so that from the ground it was not apparent any buffet existed at all.

All maneuvers were thrilling to say the least, but it was the knife-edge spins that captured my attention more than any other maneuver. Entry into the "knife" from a hammerhead was easily accomplished, even when the hammerhead pivot was sloppily flown. The pitch rate from the onset was eye-popping and almost beyond my ability to adequately hang onto. Three turns was the most I could hang onto, and even at that, I landed with the G-meter pegged on the negative end.

My 20 minutes were up in short order and, taxiing back after landing, I recalled again what Doug had said about having too much fun. I knew what he meant. And I didn't listen. With +9Gs and -6 Gs on the meter, I dragged myself out of the airplane sweaty, bruised, and exhausted, huffing and puffing as if I'd just run 5 miles. I'm no stranger to high performance and generally not easily impressed, but man was that fun! It's going to be interesting to see how the airplane's future develops in the hands of true competition professionals.

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Bonnie Kratz

Continued from page 9

At the same time that Extra was looking for better performance, he also included some changes that gave the airplane greater utility. Specifically, the aerobatic header tank is now 26.7 gallons, which is almost twice what it used to be. Inasmuch as there can be no fuel in the wing tanks while doing hard aerobatics, that used to make the trip to the practice area and back a little dicey. The bigger aerobatic tank also adds a modicum of safety and peace of mind to aerobatic practice. There are 31 gallons in the wings, giving a total of 57 gallons usable, which gives a solid three hours of cruise at more than 190 mph with a wide reserve margin.

Is the 330SC the perfect airplane and is Walter happy with it? Probably not. No designer is ever totally happy with the final product, especially since an airplane is nothing but a bunch of compromises from the beginning. That's the character of the beast. However, what is important is whether the competition community is happy with the changes that have been made and whether the airplane can regain its crown. The jury is still out on that score, and we're at the end of the competition season. The debate will have to wait until spring to be settled. With all the new hardware showing up in the box, the coming competition season promises to be the most exciting ever. 



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The IAC and AirVenture: A first-timer's view of the show

Story and photos by Reggie Paulk

For those who fly to Wisconsin commercially to attend EAA AirVenture Oshkosh, the drive north from Milwaukee to Oshkosh provides about an hour and a half to daydream about what to expect once arriving at Wittman Field. As a first-timer who has spent the majority of his life reading and subsequently daydreaming about Oshkosh, I was wholly unprepared for the experience.

Driving through the rolling green farmlands of central Wisconsin, I begin to envision an airport with rows of airplanes and RVs parked on the grass. I see World War II fighters and bombers plying the skies above. I know the air show will be spectacular, with more airplanes flying the show than anything I've ever seen. Everything I envision is correct—the scale is what I fail to grasp.

As I near Wittman Field on Route 41, a tall sign greets me with a moving message: "Welcome to AirVenture 2008."

Butterflies flit in my stomach, and my attention shifts to the RVs parked among the trees along the west side of the field. Even though it's Sunday and the event doesn't officially start until tomorrow, more RVs are parked there than I've ever seen in my life. In the sky above, airplanes arrive in groups of two, three, four.... They all seem to be headed for the same runway, and they are uncomfortably close to each other. I've read about the airborne arrival to Wittman, but actual experience gives pause to my thoughts.

Turning off the highway onto South Park Avenue, I follow a forest of orange cones onto Knapp Street Road, which then meanders onto Poberezny Road. Out my driver's side window, on the other side of the chain-link fence, Runway 09 sits flanked by row upon row of airplanes tied down in the grass. Even though there's a double-yellow line, everyone is driving the same direction. I'm supposed to head to the museum for credentials, and of course I miss the turn the first time around. My fear of not being able to make it back dissipates as I take the big circle and come back around for another try. Even on the periphery of the show, the prevalence of volunteers is noticeable—they're everywhere, helping all the newbies get where they're going without much fuss.

My parking permit tells me to go to Lot B, which is near the center of the field—premium parking. It's about as close as I can get to the IAC building without parking an airplane in the grass behind it. I don't know now, but that short walk will be very welcome toward the end of the week.

Monday morning dawns with clear skies, and the 20-minute drive from the hotel in Fond du Lac to Wittman goes by quickly. I haven't had a chance to walk the grounds yet, and am quite excited to get my feet moving.

Arriving in Lot B, I walk across the grass toward the old control tower and notice something that's nearly as ubiquitous as airplanes at Oshkosh: Port-O-Lets. At AirVenture, it's



A Perfect Combination

not possible to go more than a few hundred feet without finding a Port-O-Let farm. Those little plastic relief stations come in quite handy if you stay properly hydrated in the stifling heat that usually accompanies the event. Beyond their availability, the Porta-Pottys at Wittman are quite clean considering their level of usage. It's details like these that really make AirVenture stand out.

If the Port-O-Lets impress, wait till you see the rest of the place! The stories I've heard mentioned it would take years of visiting Oshkosh in order to see all that's offered at AirVenture. I've equipped my feet with tennis shoes to challenge that supposition head-on. With two cameras dangling around my neck, a backpack filled with Gatorade, and the determination to see it all, I confidently stride toward the first thing I see...then the next and the next.

I stroll through the Fly Market, walk through the forums and workshops plaza, and even visit AeroShell Square. After almost a full day of this, I retreat to the air-conditioned comfort of the IAC building, confident that I've seen just about everything. I may not have stopped and talked to everyone along the way, but I sure got a good look at AirVenture. Later in the evening, EAA publications' associate editor Kelly Nelson and her husband, Nate, commandeer a golf cart and invite me along for what will be an eye-opening adventure.

Heading south along the flightline, we pass the IAC building, cross AeroShell Square with the Boeing Dream-

lifter, and continue past the Charlie Hillard Air Operations Center. This is the Vintage area, which contains many Waco biplanes and the one-of-a-kind Boeing 40C in all its wood and fabric glory. After ogling the 40C, we continue south, driving all the way to the end of Runway 36 left and beyond. During this entire trip, there are uninterrupted lines of tied-down airplanes. When I again look north, I see the huge Boeing Dreamlifter dwarfed by nearly a mile of distance between it and our current location. This is when it finally hits me: AirVenture is huge. It's bigger than the uninitiated mind can grasp. I mention this to the Nelsons, and they laugh at the naiveté of my perspective.

After sitting quietly at the south end of the field, the Nelsons take me into Camp Scholler, where the RVers (the flightless ones) make their homes. As we're driving down the main dirt road that leads into the park, a gentleman stops and says something profound.

"Can you help me? I'm lost," he says, admitting defeat. "I don't know where I am, and I don't know where I'm going," he continues. "I haven't felt this way since I was a kid!"

In all my life I've never seen a middle-aged man, with nary a drop of alcohol in his system, in such a conundrum. We invite him to hop on the golf cart, and he's able to give enough of a landmark reference that we eventually get him back to where he came from. Such is the scale of AirVenture.



UPPER: Taking off from Oshkosh is a wonderful experience, but taking off in formation is purely exhilarating.

MIDDLE: The Boeing Dreamlifter pulled right into the middle of the action when in parked in Aerobase Square. Its unique design impressed even veteran AirVenture fans.

LOWER: After their performance, the Aerobase team performed a pirouette with their smoke billowing.

HOME BASE

EAA members get a lot of perks at AirVenture, but IAC members get an even better deal: a home base right in the middle of the action. The IAC building is located just a few hundred feet north of AeroShell Square and west of Runway 18R/36L. Most of the big announcements and aircraft events occur on or near AeroShell Square, and the air show centerline is located there as well. That puts a shady retreat within easy walking distance of some of the best goings on at AirVenture.

Oshkosh is run almost entirely using volunteer labor, and that holds true at the IAC building as well. At all times during the weeklong event, the information counter was staffed with high quality talent that ranged from IAC Hall of Fame inductees to National Unlimited Aerobatic Champions and air show performers. When was the last time you were able to discuss the intricacies of a hammerhead turn with someone who's won a national title?

In addition to the information counter, IAC held workshops in the shade of a tent set up next to the IAC building. The lineup of presenters included IAC Hall of Fame inductee Bill Finagin discussing the Aviat Pitts. Air show performer Elgin Wells talked about aerobatics for fun, competition, and air shows. Propeller manufacturer Gerd Muehlbauer of MT-Propeller gave tips on propeller safety, and Patty Wagstaff held an autograph session.

One of the perks of flying an aerobatic airplane is that you can park on the grass surrounding the building, and many pilots decided to do just that. In addition, the manufacturers showed off their aerobatic wares. Jim Kimball Enterprises had no fewer than five Pitts Model 12s parked out front; MX Aircraft had both its single and dual-place models on display; Sbach exhibited its beautiful orange model 300; Extra briefly showed the new 330SC; Aviat Aircraft had a nice Pitts S-2C care of Bill Finagin; and Greg Koontz showed off his Super Decathlon.

FLYING OSHKOSH

Aviation in all its forms is ultimately a deeply personal pursuit. No matter how we choose to get aloft, the way we fly is an expression of our deepest inner workings. Every pilot starts in the same place: sitting in an aircraft with little or no ability to get off and safely back onto the ground again. Even though we may have an instructor along, the process of learning to fly is an intense battle within the self. Our flight instructors give us guidance, but the process of turning flight into our second nature is something we do to ourselves. The whole time we're learning to fly, we yearn to fly alone. We want nothing more than the intense freedom that comes with flying solo. Once we've attained first solo, nothing compares. We always strive to get back to that place where all terrestrial happenings fade away, where we are fully engulfed in the moment. That's divine loneliness.

Pilots seek the sky for personal solitude, but most are the antithesis of loners. Oshkosh provides a "coming out" party, so to speak. It gives us an opportunity to meet up with old friends, share our experiences from the past, and learn from the experience of others. It also offers a wonderful opportunity to make new friends.

Anyone walking behind the IAC building would have had a hard time missing the beautiful cream and green



The grass behind the IAC building was full of every kind of aerobatic aircraft imaginable.

Firebolt parked among the other aircraft. The airplane shined like a new penny, and something about it was special. A short discussion with owner Chris May revealed the airplane was really the foundation for a once-in-a-lifetime friendship with his late mentor George Wheeler. May walked away from Oshkosh with the Reserve Grand Champion award and proof that friends may pass away, but friendship never dies.

Larry King and Sue Anderson were on hand to discuss the incredible capabilities of the Pitts Model 12 kit offered by Jim Kimball Enterprises. After a few days of walking by and pestering the two with questions, Sue took me to the Charlie Hillard Air Operations Center for the daily air show briefing and introduced me to some of the fine folks on the air show circuit. I was honored to meet Julie Clark, and I got to see Sean Tucker hammering it up in front of the performers. It's easy to see why Sean puts on such an extreme aerial display—he's just expressing his boundless energy and enthusiasm.

Sue later introduced me to Dave McGirt of the RedStar Pilots Association. He and the other pilots of the association fly as part of the Red Thunder Air Show Team. Flying a mix of Chinese CJs and Russian Yaks, these guys fly in large, tightly spaced formations. McGirt later called my cell and asked if I could be at the Warbird area within 15 minutes: The team was going to practice, and I could go along if I wanted. How lucky can a guy get? Not only do I get to fly at Oshkosh, but I get to do it in a warbird! I grabbed my camera and sprinted—eh—walked north to meet up with them.

When I arrived, McGirt introduced me to Shane Golden, who was waiting on fuel for his tricycle-gear Yak-52. I was going to occupy Shane's back seat, and the wait allowed him to educate me about the differences between the various Yak models. He also pointed out the major differences of the Chinese CJs parked on the line nearby.

Once the team was ready, we donned our parachutes and strapped into our respective birds. The heat was already building, and engine start brought a welcome breeze into the open sliding canopy. We bumped and shimmied over the grass to the taxiway, and all five planes stopped and performed their run-ups in unison. Once run-up was complete, we just had to wait for our turn to take off. With about 30 airplanes ahead of us, I thought the wait would be pretty long. I was wrong.

All of the stories I'd heard were true. Wittman tower controllers don't call you by N number. They call you by aircraft type and color. If you're the blue and white



Kent Pietsch performed in his famous "Jelly Bean" clipped-wing Taylor Craft.

Cessna, and they tell you to begin your takeoff roll, you better do it. Otherwise, you're going to have a red and white Piper and a flight of five Yaks up your tail. There's actually an usher *at the runway* hustling airplanes out. What's amazing is how well the system works. We were lined up and out of there within 10 minutes of pulling onto the taxiway. It was awesome!

Once airborne, Shane cozied up to the lead's right wing like a duckling to its mother. We stayed within 5 to 10 feet of the lead the entire time we were flying. It was easy to tell he'd been doing this a while; the throttle and stick stayed almost perfectly still. If you've flown formation, you know what a feat that is.

If you don't know it, Wittman Field is less than a mile from Lake Winnebago. We turned east and immediately went feet wet as we crossed the lake for our maneuvers. Once on the other side, we got to business practicing for the air show.

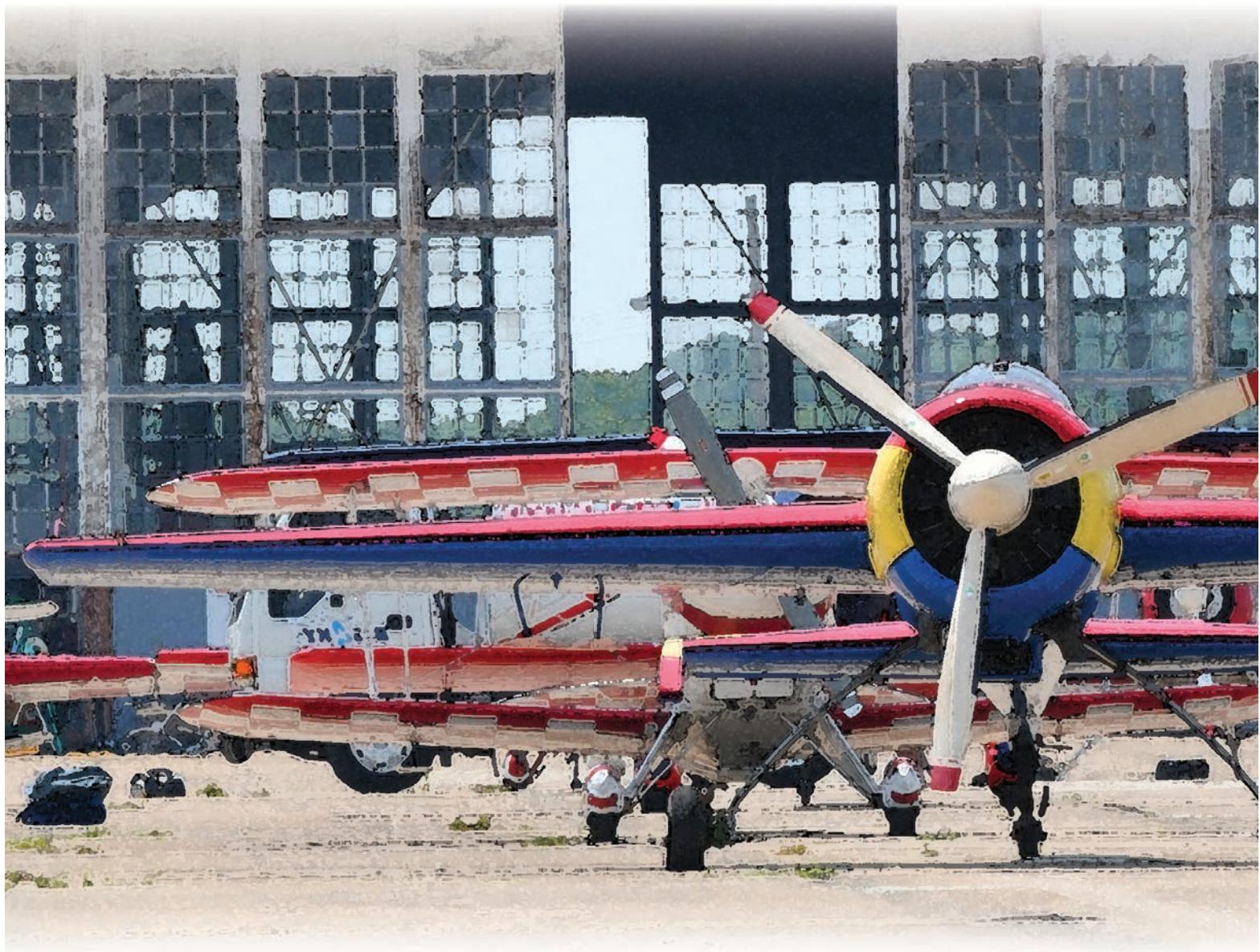
Flying formation is fun...flying formation with air show smoke is more fun. We were number three in a five-ship V-formation, and the four and five ships were off the left and right, respectively. We entered a steep dive and toward the end, four and five peeled off into loops with their smoke blazing. "Yeehaaaaa!" is not enough of an expression for the feeling. Watching an airplane 10 feet off your wing peel off with smoke like that is visual nirvana. I was burning up my camera.

After we finished our maneuvers, three members of the team formed up off our left side so I could take some shots of the lead flying inverted as his wingmen flew upright. It was breathtaking.

All too soon the fun was over, and we headed back toward Wittman for the warbird arrival. Our formation tightened back up, and we flew toward Runway 36 left for the overhead break. All five aircraft flew down the runway centerline, smoke billowing, and then peeled off for the return to the base leg. As we came down final, I could make out huge fluorescent green, pink, and blue dots painted on the runway at regularly spaced intervals. That is Wittman's trick of landing more than one airplane on the same runway at the same time. Yak flight, pink dot. You land on your dot, and everything's A-okay.

AirVenture definitely lives up to the hype it has received over the years. There is no possible way to see everything offered in one week. That's okay, though...I can't wait for next year! Thank you to everyone I had the pleasure of meeting, and I look forward to seeing you at Oshkosh next year.

Airport and Comm



Community Relations

Understanding the airport and community's needs makes the difference



Editor's Note: In this two-part series, the author shares his experience with successful chapter activities, and insights into improving relationships within our own communities.

Mark Mattioli, Esquire

Why is it that some airports openly welcome IAC chapters while others go out of their way to discourage aerobatic activity? Are there lessons we can learn from some of the more successful relationships that can be applied to other situations? While there is no panacea for all airport relations issues, a key to success is understanding how we can work with airports to the benefit of everyone involved.

We operate at the pleasure of our host airports. No flight standards district office will grant an aerobatic waiver in the vicinity of an airport unless the airport agrees. Why then don't we do more to foster better airport relations? Surely our repeated requests to have the fuel truck come out to the airplane so we can put in 5 gallons of 100LL after each hop (when diesel for the truck is probably not far from the price of 100LL) cannot be the reason for ill feelings?

In many cases, aerobatic activity also generates bad community relations for the airport. After all, it's the airport manager who receives the noise complaints. Think about the following scenario: A group of aerobatic pilots gets together and obtains a waiver for a practice box. Unfortunately, the community does not share the pilots' passion for aviation and finds the increasing use of the "box" nothing more than an annoyance that wakes them every Saturday or Sunday at some early hour. The resentment is left uncorrected, the concerns are not addressed, and sooner or later the community is at the doorsteps of the pilots with the proverbial pitchforks, seeking to slay

the aerobatic machines and their riders who are disturbing them.

The pilots react with indignation. After all, they have a valid FAA waiver that authorizes them to fly in the area during the times set forth in the document (likely during all daylight hours, seven days per week). The pilots listen but in reality don't care, being of the attitude that they are in the right. When asked by the community to avoid flying during community events, the pilots refuse. After all, the waiver allows them to fly during the designated times. Anyone who still believes the waiver immunizes them needs to understand that an FAA waiver does not necessarily prevent a lawsuit from being filed by the community for nuisance.

So what can we do? This article will focus on a few success stories where the airports openly welcomed aerobatic pilots to their runways. In one case, the chapter was able to turn a bad situ-

ation around to the point where the community now welcomes aerobatics. Perhaps the lessons of what we are doing correctly can help us foster better relations.

Know and Help Promote Your Airport's Mission: Flying W (N14), Lumberton, New Jersey

The Flying W Airport in Lumberton, New Jersey, has been the host of the Kathy Jaffe Challenge (KJC) for the last four years. Previously,

the KJC was held in New York, until the community advised us that we were no longer welcome. Use of the practice box by air show types on Easter Sunday may have had something to do with it. The KJC is one of the best contests in the country due largely to the facil-

ity at the Flying W. A large part of what makes the contest so successful and enjoyable is that the airport encourages unique and interesting activities. We in Chapter 52 now call

In one case, the chapter was able to turn a bad situation around to the point where the community now welcomes aerobatics.



the airport our home, and the airport does not seem to mind considering us its foster children.

The Flying W is more than just an airport: It is a resort, with an airplane-shaped pool only yards from the flightline, an outdoor bar for after-flight activities, and an excellent restaurant that serves high-quality food. Given these attractions, it's no wonder the airport is frequented by pilots and nonpilots alike. As general aviation airports go, it's a busy place. So why would it want a bunch of aerobatic pilots taking over the airport for four days, and why would they invite us back to conduct educational seminars?

The answer is that the owner, John Cave, and the airport manager, Mindy Redner, see the Flying W as a refuge for recreational general aviation pilots. It is the "country club" of airports, and to complete the country club picture, John also purchased the adjacent golf course for those who want to play a round of golf while staying at the on-airport hotel.

This leads to the first step in airport relations: Know how we in IAC chapters can help the airports fulfill their missions. In our case it is more than the few gallons of fuel we pur-

chase at our contest. My guess is the state police helicopter that uses the airport purchases more fuel in a day than all of the contest airplanes use in a weekend. Our pilots support the hotel and a few are known to single-handedly support the bars. The contest has become so popular with nonpilots that pool and restaurant customers call the airport to find out contest dates so they can enjoy the flying and look at the airplanes.

No Other Group Provides the Type of Training IAC Provides

A key asset of the IAC is the depth of its members. The airport very much appreciates the educational seminars sponsored by the chapter. While EAA's chapter insurance plan limits direct participation by chapters in airborne educational activities, it is clear that these types of seminars are needed and that they separate the IAC from the other groups. Indeed, these types of activities are also important to enhancing IAC's reputation with the FAA, which we will discuss later.

In this regard, Redner's main request was that we conduct additional seminars for local pilots and instructors. She stated that she frequently receives calls



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from students who are seeking aerobatic and spin training. With no options in southern New Jersey for students to receive aerobatic training, the IAC will be unable to grow membership and provide what I believe is critical instruction. Accordingly, I believe we must continue to work with the IAC to obtain acceptable insurance that allows chapters to sponsor training sessions.

Organization Is Key

Organization is key to a successful contest and chapter functions. Having members who can work with airport staff is critical. In this regard, Redner said that out of all of the aviation activities scheduled at the airport, the KJC is one of the most organized. A contest director such as Ron "El Supremo" Chadwick is certainly a key to this organization. Redner appreciates that we are able to do most of the work without overtaxing her already busy staff.

This organization applies not only to contest flying but to other activities as well. For example, an information booth is available to explain aerobatic activity and the general rules of the contest. As the Flying W has an active flight school, this is also an opportunity to recruit new members. In fact, while I was interviewing Redner for this article, a brand-new, 17-year-old pilot approached me to discuss getting into competition aerobatics. I invited him to volunteer on the judges' line as a recorder to learn more about the sport. This is an

age group we need to target. Redner strongly encourages us to conduct more youth events at the airport to get people interested in aviation.

Drawing the Community In: Borrego Valley, (L08) California

What do you do when the community suggests it no longer wants you around and its complaints cause the FAA to place multiple restrictions on the use of your aerobatic practice box? This was the scenario facing Chapter 36 only a few years ago when multiple complaints from the community went unaddressed, resulting in severe restrictions on the chapter's waiver. Fortunately, good leadership turned this situation around.

According to Randy Owens, Chapter 36's current leader, a key to the turnaround was working with, not against, the community. First, the chapter began working more closely with the airport during practices and during its contests to make sure there were no problems. This cooperation led the airport manager to invite the Sundowners, a local group, to attend a practice session and registration for the upcoming contest. The manager wanted to bring the two groups together so they could work out any problems. At first, Owens was a bit

skeptical, thinking everyone in the community hated the aerobatic pilots and that this was just a ruse to attack them. To his surprise, he learned that many in the community actually enjoyed watching the chapter practices. Too much of a good thing, however, is never positive, and they just wanted some quiet time.

The event was such a success that it was repeated the next year. In fact, it became a celebration, with a larger turnout, live music, and a car show all on the airport grounds.

**The point is that
the chapter cared
enough to take
the time to talk to
the community.**

"The local folks clapped as Doug Jardine practiced his 4-Minute Free in the box with smoke rolling," said Owens. "It was an amazing sight to see local people clapping and cheering because the

chapter was flying in the box."

This led the chapter to ask if it could attend a Rotary Club meeting and a Chamber of Commerce meeting to discuss the chapter, its impact on the town, and the waiver restrictions. These meetings put a face on the pilots using the box and demonstrated that the chapter is attentive to the needs and concerns of the community. Often it is the perception of having the ability to make a change that can alter attitudes. The point is that the chapter cared enough to take the time to talk to



the community. This is an affirmative, proactive approach that can be a healthy alternative to the public calling a meeting to complain about aerobatic activity.

As a result of its outreach efforts, Chapter 36 gained considerable support from local community groups, who backed the chapter's request to remove some of the onerous restrictions contained in the waiver. For example, the FAA had prohibited flying on consecutive weekends. Working with the community, however, this restriction was removed, and the chapter now may fly on consecutive Saturdays. Key to the success was working with the community to make sure there was no flying during town events such as parades and carnivals. Moreover, the chapter actively polices its noise so the community does not need to seek official action from the FAA. Chapter 36 polices its own members.

Owens described the turnaround as simply a matter of changing the chapter's attitude toward the community. If you approach the situation with a "we have a right to fly atti-

tude," he says, you will get nowhere. He found that if you work with the community, it will reciprocate.

But Chapter 36 does not stop there. It has also reached out to local schools and invited kids to the airport to learn about aviation, sit in the airplanes, and talk to the pilots. The chapter worked to set up a field trip to the airport for the local schools so the children could learn about flying. While a formal field trip never materialized, the school convinced the children to have their parents take them to the airport after school to meet up with the chapter, learn about airplanes, and enjoy the chapter-sponsored barbecue. The outreach event was an overwhelming success and will be repeated. In the end, there were a lot of happy kids and many thanks from the parents. What can be better than smiling kids and airplanes? As Owens reminds us, these are our future IAC members.

These types of community outreach activities are paying dividends for Chapter 36. For example, in the last four years, the chapter has received only one noise complaint.

"The key is to make sure we're not flying in the face of the town," Owens said, "but instead including them, listening to them, and getting their support."

DISCLAIMER: The opinions contained in this article are general, do not constitute legal advice, and cannot be relied upon regarding any specific legal issue that may be faced by a reader. In such cases, the reader is directed to seek appropriate legal advice.

Mark Mattioli is a business and commercial litigation attorney with Post & Schell P.C. in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. When not practicing law, he flies a Christen Eagle II based in Lumberton, New Jersey. By secret vote while he was otherwise indisposed and unable to object, he was appointed president of IAC Chapter 52. He can be reached at 215-587-1087 or at mmattioli@postschell.com

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A Non-Pilot's Guide to Enjoying Aerobatics

by Nikla Crane

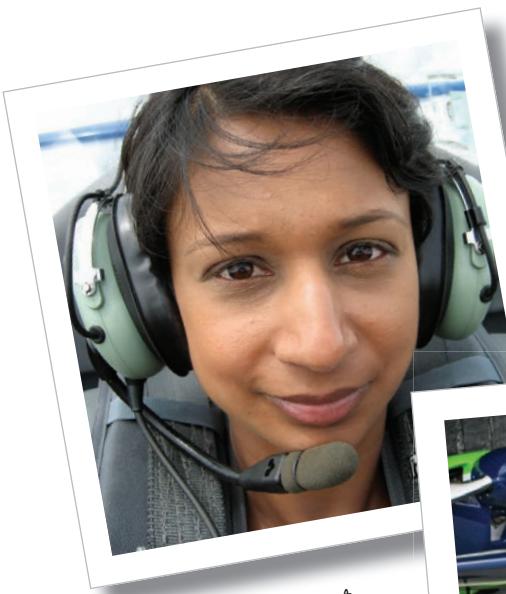
Going to aerobatic contests... I never felt at ease with the flying community in the UK. When we moved to the U.S., to my dismay, my husband Matt slowly edged toward a flying career and eventually became an aerobatics instructor.

When he suggested I attend Aerobatics Judging School with him, I thought it was one of his random ideas that would never become concrete but, lo and behold, it did! Our instructor, Ray Rose, was a certified judge and, yet, didn't fly aerobatics himself. I became reassured and really enjoyed the intellectual challenge of understanding the geometric lines that constitute an aerobatic maneuver. Armed with this knowledge, I felt a lot more confident attending an aerobic contest and, in fact, discovered that the theoretical background wasn't required.

The aerobatic community of the Northeast is a warm and welcoming crowd, and they're happy to have somebody else join their madness. Over the years, I have really begun to look forward to these contests. For me, it's about seeing the people; watching their faces light up when they tell me about the latest modification they've made to their planes; how their winter went... In the end, I know more about the people's lives than Matt does, as I spend more time on the ground with them. I really look forward to seeing them and am proud to belong to the Northeast flying community. What I love most is that it doesn't matter who the people are in "real" life. Whether they're academics or business people, I admire the energy that drives them to excel against themselves, to push their own limits in a safe and protected environment. Their passion is contagious and I feel invigorated whenever I am with them. What started out of love and a sense of duty to my husband, ended up becoming one of my favorite leisure activities.

Feel free to contact Nikla at:
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In the front seat
of the Extra.



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My husband and I with
members of Chapter 35,
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Allen Silver

By Allen Silver, IAC 431160

Ask Allen

A master rigger answers your questions about parachutes.

Q: Is it important to practice my egress procedures?

A: In today's economy, where everyone is interested in saving time and money, wouldn't it be nice if you knew how you could save approximately 50 percent or more of the time it takes you to get out of your disabled aircraft? I will tell you how, and it will take only a few seconds before and after each flight. However, it will have considerable impact on your life. Spend this valuable learning time before and after each flight when time, altitude, and your life are not rapidly running out. The idea here is for everything to become second nature.

As a vital piece of safety gear, your parachute can save your life. Unfortunately, many pilots don't think much about actually using it. As I stated before, with a little practice, you can improve and reduce the time it takes for you to egress your aircraft by approximately 50 percent or more. All you have to do is practice your emergency egress procedures before and after each flight. It's such a simple concept, yet few pilots actually do this. After all, accidents only happen to someone else, right?

Over the past few years I've run clinics at conventions, meetings, and fixed base operators that teach pilots and instructors how to egress their aircraft in case of an emergency. Soon after I began doing this, it became apparent that teaching pilots to practice these procedures before and after each flight drastically

reduced the time needed to egress an aircraft.

The reason is simple—if you have no game plan, the thought process during an emergency is a four-step, panic-filled process that goes something like this:

Step 1: Recognize the Problem. This is often referred to as the "Oh shoot! I Have a Problem" step. When a major problem occurs, your brain may take a few seconds to realize that your left wing has just departed the airplane. Once your brain recognizes that this is not going to be a good day, you'll then move on to Step 2.

Step 2: I call this the "What

All you have to do is practice your emergency egress procedures before and after each flight.

Do I Do?" step. This is where you decide you need to bail out. Now, you need to decide what to do and prioritize the steps in a logical order. Do you jettison the canopy/door or unfasten your seat belt first? Refer to my article "Practice, Practice, Practice" on my website for the answer. Okay, now that you've figured that out and have a game plan, let's proceed to Step 3 because we are quickly running out of both time and altitude.

Step 3: This is the "How Do I Do It?" step. At this point you have to understand how to put your game plan into action. You now need to find

the canopy or door release lever(s). Do you know whether to push it or pull it? All this will be more complicated if you have a passenger along and he or she doesn't understand how to release the seat belts, let alone what to do next.

Step 4: Actually Doing Whatever You Figured Out in Steps 2 and 3. Let's hope you have enough altitude and time left. Any hesitation here starts to add up. The time it takes you to go from one step to another will seem like an eternity if you happen to be plunging toward the ground in your crippled aircraft. And time, of course, is altitude. You can easily be losing a thousand feet of altitude every three to five seconds.

Practicing your emergency bailout procedures before and after each flight, I've discovered, will allow you to go directly from **Step 1 to Step 4**. What you've developed is muscle memory. You will now react quickly because you've developed a habit of practicing egress procedures over and over. Practicing is a process, not a one-time event. When you first learned to fly, your instructor didn't show you how to make one landing and then say, "Great, that's over with." You had to spend hours in the pattern to get good at it. Even now, you continue to practice maneuvers you've done over and over to make sure you don't lose your edge. Preparing for an emergency is no different.

As humans we are creatures of

habit, and repetition is the key to reacting quickly and decisively. Nothing but practice, practice, and more practice will achieve this goal. The results will save you precious time and altitude, which, in a real emergency, could mean the difference between making it home to view another sunrise. I've run hundreds of seminars, and if you practice your bailout procedures faithfully before and after each flight, you will never skip the "Oh shoot" step. Trust me, it comes out the same in any language.

Q: What should I see if I've successfully bailed out of my aircraft when I look up?

A: Hopefully not blue sky. There are many different parachutes on the market today, and you only need to become familiar with the



one you've been wearing for years. For more than 99 percent of you, that will be a round parachute. Do you know the color? Do you know if it has steering handles? If it does, what color are they and how do you steer with them? Again, I suggest you go to my website, www.SilverParachutes.com, and review my many articles on this subject. At your next repack, pull your rip cord and have your parachute rigger go over everything that's in the container until you're satisfied you understand what you have and how to use it.

Q: What is happening with the 180-day repack cycle?

A: Hopefully this is the last time I'll have to update you on it and it'll be a done deal by the time this appears in writing. My contacts at the Federal Aviation Administration's headquarters in Washington, D.C., said, "It is now on the 10th floor." What that means is it's now up for final review and the administrator's signature. Then it'll appear one more time in the *Federal Register*, giving the actual date it will become law.

Have a great day and keep the questions coming. Remember, you can always call with your questions and concerns and I'll do my best to answer them for you.

Allen Silver is the owner of Silver Parachute Sales and is always available to answer your questions about parachutes. Send them to Allen@silverparachutes.com.

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ROCKY MOUNTAIN INVITATIONAL (South Central)

Saturday, October 4 - Sunday, October 5, 2008

Practice/Registration: Friday, October 3

Giders Categories: Sportsman Intermediate

Power: Primary through Unlimited

Location: Lamar Municipal Airport (KLAA): Lamar, CO

Contest Director: Jamie S. Treat

Phone: 303-648-0130; E-Mail: JamieTreat@q.com

Website: www.iac5.org

REBEL REGIONAL AEROBATIC CONTEST (Southeast)

Saturday, October 11 - Sunday, October 12, 2008

Practice/Registration: Friday, October 10

Rain/Weather: Monday, October 13

Power: Primary through Unlimited

Location: Everett-Stewart Regional (KUCY):

Union City, TN

Contest Director: Mike Rinker

Phone: 731-885-3701 or 731-796-0849

2008 MASON-DIXON CLASH (Northeast)

Friday, October 17 - Sunday, October 19, 2008

Practice/Registration: Thursday, October 16 - Friday, October 17

Power: Primary through Unlimited

Location: Farmville Regional Airport (KFVX): Farmville, VA

Contest Director: Chris Rudd

Phone: 850-766-3756; E-Mail: akrudd@gmail.com

Website: www.iac19.org

BORREGO AKROFEST (Southwest)

Friday, October 17 - Saturday, October 18, 2008

Practice/Registration: Thursday, October 16

Rain/Weather: Sunday, October 19

Power: Primary through Unlimited

Location: Borrego Springs (L08): Borrego Springs, CA

Contest Director: Joshua Muncie

Phone: 562-688-1466; E-Mail: jlmuncie@yahoo.com

Website: www.iac36.org

58TH SEBRING AEROBATIC CHAMPIONSHIP (Southeast)

Thursday, November 6 - Saturday, November 8, 2008

Practice/Registration: Wednesday,

November 5 - Thursday, November 6

Power: Primary through Unlimited

Location: Sebring Regional Airport (SEF): Sebring, FL

Contest Director: Mike Mays

Phone: 561-734-1955 E-Mail: soaerobatics@aol.com

TEQUILA CUP (Southwest)

Friday, November 7 - Saturday, November 8, 2008

Practice/Registration: Thursday, November 6

Glider Categories: Sportsman through Unlimited

Power: Primary through Unlimited

Location: Marana Northwest Regional Airport (KAVQ): Marana, AZ

Contest Director: Jim Ward

Phone: 603-860-4456

E-Mail: james.roger.ward@gmail.com

For the most complete and up-to-date contest listings, visit www.IAC.org.

If your chapter is hosting an event, be sure to post it there.

C L A S S I F I E D S

AIRCRAFT

Christen Eagle I – <http://www.trade-a-plane.com/specs?clsfnum=745551>; <http://www.iac.org/featured/Featured%20article%20-%20Vol.33,%20No.02%20February%202004.pdf>; 662-429-9009.

Edge-540s - 1998, 490hrs TT, 1 owner, immaculate condition. A/C located in NZ. Call Steve Taylor **64-21-960-432** or e-mail cars.unlimited@xtra.co.nz for details.

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meet a member

Name: DJ Molny

City, State: Lone Tree, Colorado

Occupation: Software entrepreneur

Family: Wife, Cindy; dogs, Reno and Wally

Pilot Certificate: Commercial (ASEL and instrument ratings)

Aircraft Flown: Extra 300L

E-mail Address: djmolny@yahoo.com

What experience drew you to flying?

I was always interested in airplanes as a kid, reading books about flying, building models, and so on. At age 24, I clipped a coupon for a \$25 Cessna introductory flight from the back of an airline magazine. It only took one lesson to hook me.

What was your first experience with aerobatics?

On a Waco ride in Hawaii. The pilot did a loop and a roll out over the Pacific Ocean. It was pretty awesome. Later I got some acro instruction in a Citabria as part of my tailwheel training.

What got you into competition?

I was looking for a sporty plane back in 1998 and came across an ad for a one-third share of an S-2B in the local paper. I remember thinking, "I have got to get one of these!" before we even left the ground. The owner introduced me to IAC competition, and I've been at it ever since.

Tell me about your airplane?

It's a 1996 Extra 300L, with the red, white, and blue starburst design and a four-blade prop. Other than a SlickStart ignition booster and digital oil temperature/pressure gauge, it's factory original. The engine's still running strong (knock on wood) as it nears the 1,200-hour mark. It flies beautifully and has excellent manners on the runway. I fly it about 80 hours a year.

How did you obtain this airplane?

I bought the plane with a partner, through a private seller in Florida. We did our checkouts with Clint McHenry and felt very comfortable at the end of the course. My friend sold his share to me last year, and I'm looking for a new partner.

What is your most memorable contest moment?

Watching the world's best at the 2003 WAC in Lakeland, Florida. The spectators were looking down the X-axis, and we got to see many of the tricks the pilots used to give a pleasing view to the judges.

What is your favorite part of a contest?

The diving wing wag to start the sequence; the adrenaline's pumping and it's "go" time.

Tell me a person or persons in the sport you admire.

I'm very fortunate to live in Colorado where we have a strong chapter with a lot of talented individuals. Mike Jones is a great instructor and mentor of judges. Clyde Cable helps keep the sport fun and safe, and is a terrific role model for competitors everywhere. He flies beautifully and often wins the Intermediate category—at age 80.

Where would you like to see yourself going in the sport?

I moved up to Advanced last year and am not yet competitive in the category. I'll be very happy when I can fly all three sequences cleanly and with good box management.





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