

# **SPORT** **Aerobatics**

AUGUST 2010

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE of the INTERNATIONAL AEROBATIC CLUB

1970 – 2010



**FORTY YEARS OF EXCELLENCE**

**Collegiate  
Aerobatics**

**Naming the  
Decathlon**



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*"I remember my hands being so sweaty and my legs shaking the entire time. I loved it."*

Erica Larsen

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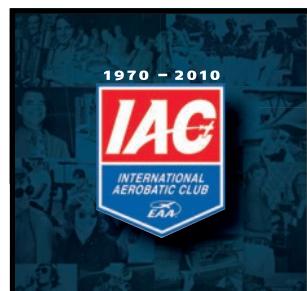
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## THE COVER

The IAC celebrates forty years of excellence.

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**REGGIE PAULK**  
 COMMENTARY / EDITOR'S LOG

## Recalling the Past

Bringing in the future

**AS I WRITE THIS,** AirVenture is still a few weeks away. By the time this issue is in your hands, we'll have gathered a few more months' worth of stories and Nationals will be right around the corner.

Over the winter, I had an opportunity to visit Oshkosh for a planning meeting before launching In the Loop. Former IAC President Doug McConnell picked me up in Milwaukee, and I had an opportunity to speak with him at length about his personal contribution to aviation history.

As we were driving to Oshkosh, he described his involvement with the Decathlon. It slowly dawned on me that there was a story to be told, and I encouraged him to recount his experience with the project. His story is a fascinating tale of one of the most prominent airplanes in aerobatic history.

I may have written this before, but I'll say it again; Oshkosh is a much different place in the winter than during the height of AirVenture! If you've never experienced winter in Oshkosh, snowdrifts are piled high where airplanes usually park. The biting wind chills you to the bone in the same place where sky-high temperatures send people looking for shade in summer. If

you've been to EAA's facilities during the summer, I highly recommend the winter experience just for the contrast.

The International Aerobic Club's resident historian is Mike Heuer. His IAC number is 4; only three away from Tom Poberezny's number 1. Mike was deeply involved with the IAC's formation 40 years ago while working alongside his father, Bob. He has an encyclopedic memory of the people and planes that formed the basis of our organization, and he brings us another account of the early days in this issue. If there are any of you reading this who would like to know more about something you remember way back when, send me an e-mail and maybe you'll read about it in the coming months.

**Mike was deeply involved with the IAC's formation 40 years ago . . .**

I briefly attended Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in the mid-'90s. While there, my roommate and I founded an aerobatic club. Nothing much happened with it, and it disappeared after we left. A few years later, someone with a little more energy and perseverance founded the Eagle Sport Aviation Club to promote sport aviation on and off campus. With a Pitts, J-3 Cub, two gliders, and a tow-plane, the club services more than 50 members and is open to the public. Larry Fletcher brings us the story of the club and a very big part of the future of the IAC. **IAC**

Please submit news, comments, articles, or suggestions to: [reggie.paulk@gmail.com](mailto:reggie.paulk@gmail.com)



**DOUG BARTLETT**  
COMMENTARY / PRESIDENT'S PAGE

## Halfway Through

**THE FOURTH OF JULY** has passed, the summer flying season is half over, and I am back home in Marco Island, Florida. June was a wonderful month that took me to two corners of the United States and a couple of wonderful aerobatic contests.

The first stop in June was Ephrata, Washington, for the 25th anniversary of the first Apple Cup in 1985. The plan was to fly my Edge 540 from Chicago to Ephrata following Interstate 90 across the country. Being a flatlander, the thought of flying the Rocky Mountains (the "Rocks" as our friends in Washington State refer to them) seemed like a real adventure. The adventure will have to wait until next year as the weather just would not cooperate. United Airlines flew me to Seattle on short notice, and a rental car drove me the rest of the way. The three-hour drive from Seattle to Ephrata led me from a busy seaport, through dense colorful forests, and around mountain lakes. The trip continued through mountain passes onto a high plains desert that I never knew existed. After crossing over the Columbia River and pulling into Ephrata, the real fun started.

Jim and Ann Marie Ward were the co-contest directors and ran a safe, well-organized contest. The skies cooperated from practice day on through the end of the contest. The pilots used every bit of the good weather on practice day by flying until sunset and into the start of a wonderful salmon feast. IAC Chapter 67 also had an accessory in its contest kit that was very useful at this event.

It was a 5-hp blender with a motorcycle throttle to control the blending speed. It would go well with the motorized picnic table I saw at the Sebring Aerobatic Contest.

To celebrate the 25th anniversary, Jim and Ann Marie created a special flying event called the Masters Flight Program. The winners of the Known flight in each of the top four categories flew their category Known programs from the 1985 contest as an Unknown. Prior to this event, I could not remember seeing four such

great flights in a row. Maybe it was because the pressure was off and it was a "just for fun" flight. Flying Sportsman, Kathleen Howell won with more than 90 percent, just edging out Greg Howard flying Unlimited. All at this contest had great fun.

The following week, it was on to Seward for another wonderful contest. The chapter in Lincoln, Nebraska, is small in members but rich in volunteers. The volunteer coordinator, Shad Dahlgren, has a great group to work with. As an example, Tom Trumble and Brian Johnson volunteered all weekend to sit on the corners to support the contest. We had a special gathering of great female pilots including Betty Stewart, Linda Meyers Morrissey, and Debby Rihn-Harvey. Debby flew while

Betty and Linda helped out on the judging line. Harry Barr provides the chapter with a wonderful clubhouse to hold the event, and the city of Seward could not have been more accommodating.

This contest drew contestants from Texas (Bill Denton, Tom Rhodes, and Debby Rihn-Harvey) as well as a nice group of students from the University of North Dakota (UND). The UND pilots, five in all, flew one Super Decathlon in Primary, Sportsman, and Intermediate. They gave that airplane a hard workout and flew it well. Another fun and safe contest is in the record books thanks to Co-contest Directors Ed and Lynn Bowes.

Before I sign off I will leave you newer aerobatic pilots with a tip. When practicing rolls, practice them from inverted and start with 2-point rolls. The bulk of problems I see with rolls in Primary, Sportsman, and Intermediate come from insufficient forward pressure on the stick when passing through the inverted portion of the roll. The result of this is "dishing out" of the roll as you try to get the nose back up to the horizon. When you practice from inverted flight you will already have forward pressure and will need a touch more when starting the roll. Focus on the horizon and do what it takes to keep the nose on a distant point. And remember, whatever you practice to the right should be also practiced to the left. Altitude is your friend; fly safely! **IAC**

" . . . I could not remember seeing four such great flights in a row."

## MYSTERY AIRPLANE OF THE MONTH



BY MIKE HEUER,  
IAC 4 AND IAC HISTORIAN

**THIS BEAUTIFUL MONOPLANE IS** the Kraft Super Fli. The airplane was designed by Phil Kraft, of model airplane fame, and completed at the Kraft Systems factory at Oceanside Municipal Airport in southern California in 1974. It won the Best New Aerobatic Design award at Oshkosh that year.

Flown by IAC member Steve Nelson for some 13 years, it was competitive in the Unlimited category until about 1978 when new airplanes began appearing on the scene with larger engines and lighter weights. A Lycoming IO-360 200-hp engine with fixed-pitch propeller powered the Super Fli. Phil

Kraft was the owner and sponsor, with Bill Bennett of Circus Circus fame adding his sponsorship to the aircraft in later years. Kraft Systems made radio-control units for model aircraft, and Phil was an avid pilot and owner of numerous aircraft himself.

The airplane was purchased in 1988 by former British team member Ian Padden who fitted an O-540 to it. Its present whereabouts are unknown as the N number is now used on another aircraft. At the time it was flying competitively, few monoplanes were in use in the Unlimited category as the Pitts still dominated the scene. **IAC**

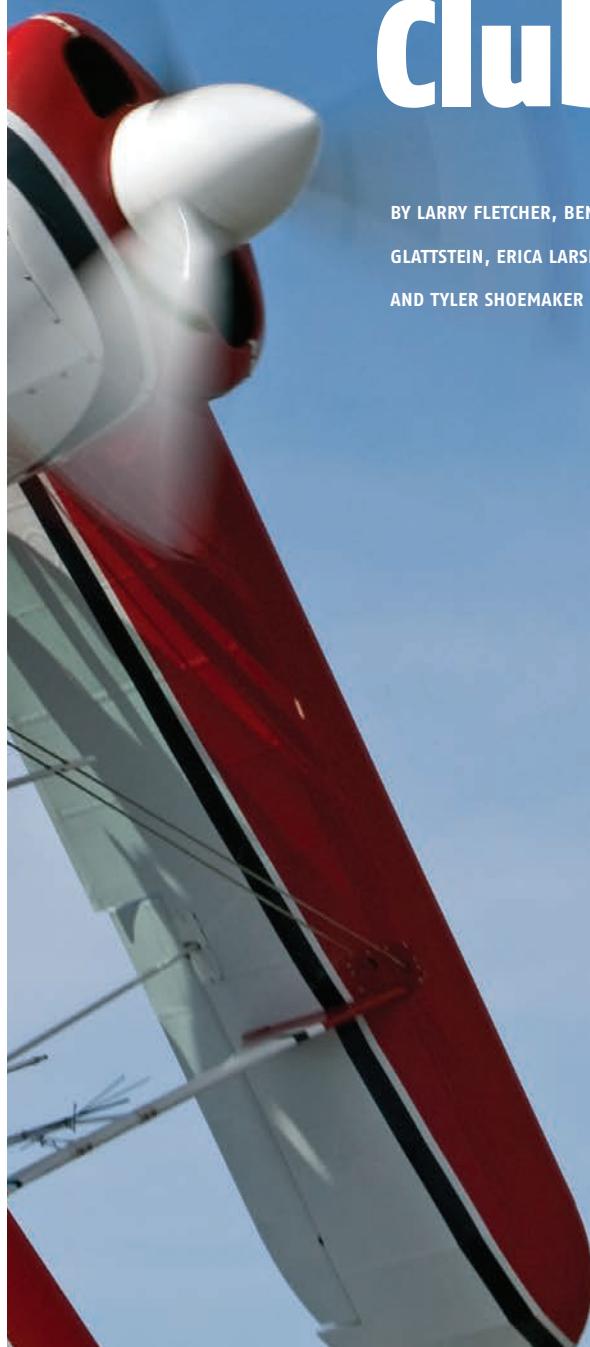
## U.S. NATIONAL AEROBATIC CHAMPIONSHIPS CONTEST SCHEDULE

DATE	TIME	UNLIMITED	ADVANCED	INTERMEDIATE	SPORTSMAN / PRIMARY
<b>SUN Sept 19</b>	13:00	briefing & order	briefing & order	-	briefing & order
	14:00	pilot briefing	judge briefing	-	-
	15:00	KNOWN 3-1/2 hrs	volunteer	-	-
	18:00	unknown I figure sub	-	-	-
	19:30	unknown I figure dist	-	-	-
<b>MON Sept 20</b>	08:00	judge briefing	pilot briefing	-	-
	09:00	volunteer	KNOWN 3-1/2 hrs	-	-
	11:30	-	-	pilot briefing	judge briefing
	12:30	unknown I sequence sub	-	KNOWN 2-1/2 hrs	volunteer
	14:00	pilot briefing	judge briefing	-	-
	15:00	unknown I sequence dist	-	-	-
	15:00	FREE 3 HRS (+1/2)	volunteer	-	-
	18:00	unknown I order	unknown figure sub	free program order	-
	19:30	-	unknown figure dist	-	-
<b>TUE Sept 21</b>	08:00	judge briefing	pilot briefing	-	-
	09:00	volunteer	FREE 3 hrs (+1/2)	-	-
	11:30	-	-	judge briefing	pilot briefing
	12:30	-	unknown sequence dist	volunteer	KNOWN 2-1/2 hrs
	14:00	pilot briefing	judge briefing	-	-
	15:00	UNKNOWN I 3 hrs (+1/2)	volunteer	-	-
	18:00	unknown II figure sub	unknown order	-	flight II order
	19:30	unknown II figure dist	-	-	-
<b>WED Sept 22</b>	08:00	-	-	judge briefing	pilot briefing
	09:00	-	-	volunteer	FLIGHT II 3-1/2 hrs
	12:00	unknown II sequence sub	-	-	-
	12:00	judge briefing	pilot briefing	-	-
	13:00	volunteer	UNKNOWN 2-1/2 hrs	-	-
	14:30	-	-	free program briefing	judge briefing
	15:30	unknown II sequence dist	-	FREE 3 hrs (+1/2)	volunteer
	18:00	-	-	order of flight	order of flight
<b>THU Sept 23</b>	08:00	-	-	judge briefing	pilot briefing
	09:00	-	-	volunteer	FLIGHT III 3-1/2 hrs
	12:00	unlimited pilot briefing	judge briefing	-	-
	13:00	UNKNOWN II 2-1/2 hrs	volunteer	-	-
	14:30	-	-	pilot briefing	judge briefing
	15:30	-	-	UNKNOWN 2-1/2 hrs (+1/2)	volunteer
	18:00	4 min free order	-	-	-
<b>FRI Sept 24</b>	09:00	4 min free pilot brief	judge briefing	-	-
	10:00	4 MINUTE FREE	volunteer	-	-



# The Eagle Sport Aviation Club

BY LARRY FLETCHER, BEN GLATTSTEIN, ERICA LARSEN AND TYLER SHOEMAKER



## A GREAT BEGINNING

**T**here are times when Captain Matt Edson, sitting alone in his F-16 at 43,000 feet, lets his mind drift back to flying the Pitts. He's often so busy managing the cockpit at Mach 0.95 that "there's not a lot of time to look out the window and enjoy flying. Some of those times I wish I was in an aerobatic box, pulling g's."

He loves flying for the Vermont Air National Guard, and serving as the unit's life support officer. He's been to Iraq twice, flying close air support. But the opportunity to fly high-performance aircraft began in Daytona Beach, Florida, when he enrolled at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and joined the Eagle Sport Aviation Club (IAC).

Like many other club members, Matt was looking for an addition to his résumé, but he was also interested in having some fun and taking upset training to make him a safer pilot. Then—just like other club members—he was hooked. In time came competitions in Sportsman and Intermediate, then instructing in the Pitts S-2B and acting as an International Aerobatic Club (IAC) judge.

Since its inception in 1999, the club has had almost 500 members—most of whom are Embry-Riddle students, but the independent club accepts any pilot as a member. The non-student members have included airline pilots, federal agents, and journalists. At any one time, there are about 60 active members who do everything from washing airplanes and changing oil, to maintaining paperwork and administering rules and policies. The club not only turns out better pilots, but also leaders who learn the ins and outs of running a complex organization.

"I learned a lot," Matt says. "Dealing with people, organization, leadership in teaching."

Although Matt says flying aerobatics didn't guarantee he would qualify as an F-16 pilot, "flying the Pitts gave me confidence that I was competitive in the aviation community."



The club, which is associated with IAC Chapter 288, holds its own sanctioned contest each spring. The Phil Schacht Aerobatic Kickoff is held at Keystone Heights Airport (42J) and features Primary through Unlimited competition in both powered aircraft and gliders. The club is run mainly by members with the assistance of some of the best competitors and judges in Florida and the nation.

Since 2003, nearly 40 percent of all first-time IAC aerobatic competitors nationwide have flown their first contest in the club's Pitts. The red-and-white biplane, which has competed at some 35 contests, is the loudest symbol of the group.

"The club," co-founder Pat Anderson says, "is a three-legged stool: aerobatics, tailwheel, and soaring."

In addition to the Pitts, the club has a 1946 J-3 Cub, three gliders, and a Pawnee towplane. "That's what has kept it going," Pat says.

Soaring, in fact, is the genesis of the club. Pat, associate professor of aerospace engineering at Embry-Riddle, and some buddies were already flying gliders "aggressively," so the move to aerobatics was a natural one. Club members today compete in both power and glider aerobatics.

"It's a good group," Pat says. He notes that the club makes airplanes like the Pitts affordable, and offers scholarships.

"Some people don't have the cash, but are willing to put the effort in to fly," Pat says. "They are worth taking a risk on."

The club operates on a tight budget, with money coming from a membership fee,

donations, and sponsorships. In fact, the club is a beneficiary of the largesse of great air show performers, a famous actor, and some of the best aviation companies in the world.

The 1986 Pitts has a strong lineage: It was once owned by air show performer and aerobatic instructor Randy Gagne, an Embry-Riddle alum. His widow, Sheree, who offered up her share, donated it to the club. Money was raised to pay for the remaining balance. One contributor, who gave \$10,000, was actor and pilot Tom Cruise.

"I like instructing in the Pitts because it is a challenging airplane to fly," says Mikhael Ponso, club president who is working on his master's degree at Embry-Riddle. He started in the Cub and gliders before strapping on the Pitts, and competes in both power and glider aerobatics.

"By far, I enjoy flying with the ESA students because they all have a desire to be there," Mikhael says. "They are all extremely excited and willing to learn. It is by far the most relaxed and fun atmosphere I have ever taught in."

Mikhael lists the practical reasons for learning to fly aerobatics, particularly in the Pitts: improved skills and situational awareness. "The Pitts is a demanding stick-and-rudder airplane to fly just straight and level," he says.

But Anderson says there is a more basic reason to tumble in the air. "Aerobatics is just fun," says the IAC collegiate chairman and judge. "It's fun, and it's like the Olympics—you strive for perfection."

For more information on the Eagle Sport Aviation Club, visit [www.EagleSport.org](http://www.EagleSport.org).



*LEFT TO RIGHT.* At Nationals 2009 with everyone that helped the ESA get there; Mikhael Ponso, Ryan Waller, Fred Weaver, Rafael Soldan, Andrea Luethi, Carol Brinker, Joe Brinker, Kevin Campbell, Tangie Campbell, Pete Eslick, Laurie Rameriz, Hector Rameriz.





*Mikhael Ponso and Laetitia Tinebra. During a special event ESA put together with Joe and Carol Brinker of SunQuest Aviation school in West Palm beach.*

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS:

### Ben Glattstein

I have been practicing for competition aerobatics for a little while now, rehearsed my maneuvers many times and am thoroughly looking forward to it. I can feel the air-filled with enthusiasm. It is an indescribable energy that is circulated by my fellow club members. My smile widens as I buckle up, surrounded by my club members, my friends. They hand me my seat belts, they pass me my headset, last minute tips, some cheers, a pat on the shoulder, and they send me off. It does not get much better than that.

Everyone gets the same treatment, and it is genuine. My competition is by my side, cheering me on. It is an embedded culture that stirs within the Eagle Sport Aviation Club. However, this camaraderie is not limited to competition aerobatics. Many of my weekends have been spent with these amazing people. All of us share a passion that is sport flying, and I have seen many people within the club go to great lengths to help one another.

The culture of this club is supportive in every sense of the word. New members are brought in and flooded with an enthusiastic passion held by our seasoned members. Our club members range from first-time fliers to the highly experienced. Age does not matter—we don't measure age, we measure enthusiasm.

For me, this club was a great avenue to pursue sport flying. Along the way, I have met a network of like-minded pilots who I consider to be great friends. I believe this club's greatest assets are not just in its aircraft.

I joined this club to fly, yet I feel I have come away with so much more.



*List of all ESA Pitts instructors beginning with Peter Pierpont (co-founder of the club together with Pat Anderson) to the last check-out Pitts instructor.*

## Erica Larsen

Me fly upside down? What? If you had asked me that question 10 years ago, even five years ago, my answer would have been, "Heck no!" But ask me now; I dare you. My passion for aviation didn't exactly start off like those of some commercial pilots.

As a child, I was terrified to fly. That is, terrified to the degree that I would not be able to sleep the night before—not only out of excitement, but because of the nervous butterflies that infested my tummy. I would always sit in the middle seat between my mom and dad, squeezing their hands for dear life at the slightest hint of turbulence. "Dad, Dad, Dad! What's that? Why's that happening? Are we going to be okay? When is that going to stop, Dad?" That was me, the little 12-year-old girl you didn't want to get stuck sitting next to on your flight.

Ten years later, now 22, I sit on the complete opposite side of the spectrum, loving aviation and wanting to fly upside down whenever I get the chance. I started my training at age 17 in a Piper J-3 Cub, an airplane that truly made me fall in love with flying. I am now a commercial pilot working on my flight instructor ticket, flying aerobatics, and also an active member of the Eagle Sport Aviation Club. I was introduced to the club by one of my old flight instructors and good friends. He gave me the push that I needed to go on an introductory ride with him in the Pitts S-2B.

That day is a day I will never forget. It took me forever to strap into the harness. You'd think I was almost trying to drag it out because I was so nervous, but I was extremely excited at the same time. I remember my hands being so sweaty and my legs shaking the entire time. I loved it.

We did loops, rolls, and a spin. At that point my tummy was telling me it was time to head back to our base, New Smyrna, Florida. Once we were back on the ground, I felt a little sick, but it was totally worth it. I knew that I wanted to push my body and myself, get used to the g's, get over any fears, and compete in the next contest.

The next flight we did, I felt a little more comfortable and I was ready to take the controls and try the maneuvers for myself. The Pitts was so powerful, yet responsive and safe at the same time. My fears escaped my body the more I did each maneuver, all by myself. I could do it, and I was doing it!

After five flights of getting acquainted with the Pitts and each maneuver, I competed in Primary at the Southeast Aerobatic Open. My first contest was a blur. Each flight felt like a blink of an eye. Before I knew it, it was over. Never in my life had I experienced so much adrenaline rushing through my body.

I have the Eagle Sport Aviation Club to thank for recharging my passion for aviation. It's more than a club—it's a family, one that I'm proud to be a part of. It has opened my eyes to the world of aerobatics, a world unlike any other.

LEFT TO RIGHT:  
Mikhael Ponso,  
Ben Glattstein,  
Tyler Shoemaker,  
Charlie Wilkinson





*Tyler Shoemaker (left) and Ryan Waller frame a caricature of Phil Schact, a former Chapter 288 member who is remembered for his positive attitude and tireless volunteerism.*

## Tyler Shoemaker

My first experience at the controls of an aircraft was during a discovery flight in a Cessna 172. At the time, I thought life could not get any better than straight and level flying.

Learning to be a professional pilot, I was wrapped up in the idea of applied flying. Like a horse with blinders on, all I knew were procedures and the practical test standards. Through my narrowed vision, all I could see was a regional airline career with a glimpse of maybe flying for a major. Then out of nowhere, my eyes were reopened. My fellow flight instructor and good friend told me about a club that I had to join. A club, as he put it, that would show me some true flying.

The next morning, I drove out to New Smyrna Beach Airport on Florida's West Coast, where I met up with one of the club's aerobatic instructors. As the hangar door slid open, it revealed one of the most beautiful sights I have ever seen: the Pitts. The beautiful machine sat in the hangar as if it were ready to jump into the air. It was love at first sight.

"Empty your pockets and jump in," was the preflight briefing I received, which included bailout procedures. Once we made our way to the

runway, I was filled with both excitement and fear. I was finally about to experience true flight. As the Pitts screamed down the runway and into the air, my blinders of applied aviation ripped off, and I have not seen them since. I was able to see the world in a whole new way: loops, rolls, spins, and hammer-heads. I could not get enough. The freedom and the g's felt so good. After my instructor demonstrated some maneuvers, he gave me the flight controls and said, "Try a loop of your own." As I floated through the top of my first loop, I found the feeling I had been chasing my whole life. That day was the beginning of not only a new passion but also of an obsession.

I quickly learned that aerobatic flight is more of an art form than a step-by-step procedure. It is one of the few places left in aviation where you can experience ultimate freedom paired with the highest level of precision. I also learned that with the correct mind-set, it can also be a safe passion.

The applied aspect of flying will always be needed for safe and organized flying. Aerobatics, however, contains the best of all worlds—being able to see the envelope instead of only reading about it. It is about seeing how aerodynamics affects an airplane as opposed to hearing about it. Aerobatics has not only changed my life, but also changed my career goals as a pilot. **IAC**



# 40 Years of IAC History

## Part II – The Founders

**IN THE FIRST INSTALLMENT** in this series of articles on IAC's 40 years, I talked about the sport aerobatics world as it existed in the 1960s and some of the reasons IAC was formed in 1970 and the developments that surrounded it. A lot happened in a very short time.

But like many causes, movements, and revolutions, IAC came together because of a unique combination of people who made it happen, who worked together as a team, and were all visionary in their own right. This part in our series is devoted to them.

BY MIKE HEUER  
IAC #4 & IAC HISTORIAN





**IAC**'s roots began in the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) during the mid-1960s with the EAA Precision Flying Division and later the EAA Aerobatic Division under the leadership of Bill Dodd and James Morgan, respectively. These weren't really formal organizations but rather a loose fraternity of people who loved aerobatics and were all EAA members. Paul Poberezny, EAA's founder and president at the time, knew that preserving our freedom of flight in homebuilt aircraft required a superb safety record in order to avoid government regulatory intervention. With aerobatics just starting to take off in the United States, it was time to get a handle on safety. But it was the split within the Aerobatic Club of America that provided the spark to get it done, and in the fall of 1969, Bob Heuer and Don Taylor approached Paul Poberezny at his office in Hales Corners, Wisconsin, with a request to really

begin work on a formal organization. (The name, International Aerobatic Club, came later.) Paul agreed, making the full resources of EAA available and lending us a few hundred dollars to get it moving.

#### PAUL POBEREZNY, IAC 1

After IAC was formed, Paul was awarded IAC membership number 1. Aside from the fact that Paul knew EAA must be involved to help guide the development of the sport, he also had a personal love of aerobatics. A frequent air show performer in the EAA AirVenture Museum's North American P-64, Paul was a visitor to many of the early competitions. In 1968, his son, Tom—later to become a part of the Eagles Aerobatic Team, a U.S. National Aerobatic Champion, and U.S. Aerobic Team member as well as the current president of EAA—competed in one of the few aerobatic contests at the time in Monroe, Louisiana. In 1970, Tom became IAC's first treasurer, and his sister, Bonnie, our first secretary. So it was a family affair with the Poberezneys as well.

The IAC's founders realized that the way to growth and success was going to be much easier by allying ourselves with EAA, which even in 1970 was a very successful and large aviation association. But it was EAA's grassroots culture that made it a natural home for aerobatic enthusiasts at the time. EAA had chapters and dozens of local fly-ins. Paul and his team of supporters had created all of this from scratch—and IAC used it as a model. Paul and EAA were among the best things to happen to our sport.



Audrey and Paul Poberezny, IAC #1, share a moment with Bill Thomas at a Fond du Lac awards banquet in 1976.



Bob Heuer (center) with Don Taylor, IAC #3, to his left.



*Bob Heuer, IAC #2 (left) is presented a Lifetime membership in IAC by then President Verne Jobst in 1974.*



*Don Taylor, IAC #3 at Fond du Lac in 1976.*



*Harold Neumann, famous race pilot from the 1930's and IAC member and competitor (left) with Gail and Don Taylor, IAC #3, at Fond du Lac in 1978.*

### **BOB HEUER, IAC 2**

A pilot for American Airlines based in Chicago, my father, Bob, had joined EAA in the early 1960s, and our family attended the EAA fly-in convention for the first time in 1963. An early admirer of the Cole Brothers air show, Dad renewed his friendship with Duane and Marion Cole at the 1965 EAA fly-in convention in Rockford, Illinois. Later deciding to turn his attention to aerobatic flying and involving the whole family, he flew his first competition in 1966 and eventually competed in the Unlimited category flying a Ryan ST-A, beginning in 1968. We built a Pitts S-1S in 1969, and both Dad and I competed in the airplane that year. It was N442X, which later was flown by

Charlie Hillard to the World Aerobatic Championships team title in 1972, and it now rests in the EAA AirVenture Museum in Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

Dad was a strong and principled man, backed up by a wonderful team of friends. His ideas about safety, grassroots orientation, the need for a multicategory system of competition, regional competitions, and sharing of information formed some of the basic principles that survive to this day. Dad became IAC's first president in 1970 and retired from the position in 1973 in order to get back to flying, though he served on the IAC board of directors for several years. Later he flew a 450 Stearman in air shows and

at EAA Oshkosh in the 1980s. He passed away in 2006.

### **DON TAYLOR, IAC 3**

Don was fairly recent to the Chicago area in the late 1960s but quickly became a moving force in IAC because of his incredible energy, focus, judging and flying expertise, and talent for organization. He became IAC's first vice president and chairman of the Rules Committee. Leaving IAC office in 1973, he subsequently had a very successful career in aerobatics, contributing in many ways. A delegate of the Commission Internationale de Voltige Aerienne (CIVA), manager of the U.S. Aerobic Team, chief judge of the World Aerobatic Championships in 1990, contest director of the 1980 World Aerobatic Championships in Oshkosh, and originator and producer of the Hilton Masters of Aerobatics series, Don was also the U.S. Aerobatic Foundation's first president. The foundation was

formed in 1982 after IAC took over the responsibilities for the entire aerobatic sport that year, including the Nationals and U.S. Aerobatic Team effort. He raised an extraordinary amount of money, and despite just a few months of time to do it all, the team successfully participated in the World Aerobatic Championships in Spitzerberg, Austria, that year. Now retired from United Airlines, he continued to pursue various business interests for many years. Any mention of Don wouldn't be complete without recognizing Gail Taylor, his wife, who shared his attention to detail and was a consummate organizer in her own right. Both were true partners in aerobatics. They reside in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

#### **MIKE HEUER, IAC #4**

As a young man very lucky to be in the right place at the right time, I found myself surrounded by men who served as mentors and role models. At the time IAC was formed, I had just turned 20 years old, but I attended all of the early meetings and assisted my father in the day-to-day administrative work that

was required. I authored most of the early IAC newsletters, under my father's byline, and spent most of my Christmas college vacation in 1969 and early 1970 helping to prepare the final draft of the IAC rulebook. For those efforts, the founders of the club decided to give me membership number 4.

I served as IAC Chapter 1's first president in 1970, and in 1973 after returning from U.S. Air Force pilot training, I became IAC vice president under the newly elected President Verne Jobst. In subsequent years, I served as treasurer and president for nine years and a member of the board of directors for nearly 37 years. Today, I serve as the president of CIVA in Lausanne, Switzerland—something that would never have been possible for me without the men and women who set such a good example and had the confidence in me to work side-by-side with them.

I flew in competition, up through Advanced, on and off for 24 years and retired from Northwest Airlines in 2007. I now live in the Memphis, Tennessee, area.

#### **JIM DEES – IAC 5**

Jim was someone who might be described as the "quiet man" on the first board of directors. Another United Airlines pilot (we had three on the first board), Jim was partner with Jim Lacey in an aerobatic airplane—a D-260 Senior Aero Sport—when we first met the two Jims at Rockford in the late



Bob Heuer, IAC #2 (left) and Mike Heuer, IAC #4 (right) share a moment at Fond du Lac with Curtis Pitts in 1976.

*Tom Poberezny, IAC #7, pictured with Pitts S-1C N8J – the first airplane Tom flew in competition in 1968.*



Jim Lacey, IAC #6 (left) is presented the Rolly Cole Memorial Trophy by Duane Cole in 1977

1960s. Though not as extroverted as some of the other founders, Jim was always there with solid, common-sense advice and enjoyed Bob Heuer's deep respect. He left the board fairly early in IAC's history but remains as a current member. He retired from United Airlines and resides in Coral Springs, Florida.

#### **JIM LACEY – IAC 6**

A man who was deeply respected and liked by so many IAC members, Jim remained active in the organization for many years after our formation. Jim was a pilot and later chief pilot for United Airlines, and he was colorful, extroverted, always smiling, full of jokes, and imbued with a warm personality. He built a Pitts S-1C, competed on and off, and owned a succession of airplanes. For many years, he headed up our flight operations at Fond du Lac as sort of a "super starter" to keep the competition moving and safe, since the IAC Championships attracted so many pilots in those early years, with the peak in 1974 of 135 competitors. Everyone had to pitch in to make it work; Jim added his own flavor and leadership to the operation. He passed away in 1992.

#### **TOM POBEREZNY – IAC 7**

It's difficult to add much to what has already been said about Tom, who serves as the president of EAA today, but his passion and energy were infectious and vital in those first couple years. Always a man of detail, he helped guide us financially but with an outstanding larger view of the future. In the same year IAC was formed, he first attended a World Aerobatic Championships in Hullavington, United Kingdom, as an assistant judge to John Armstrong. He moved on to Unlimited competition shortly thereafter and made the U.S. Aerobatic Team in 1972, competing at Salon-de-Provence, France. For 25 years after that time, he flew in the Red Devils and Eagles aerobatic teams with Charlie Hillard and Gene Soucy. He won the U.S. National Aerobatic Champion title in 1973.

#### **JOHN LUMLEY – IAC 8**

A TWA pilot based in Chicago, Illinois, John was at the early meetings of the IAC founders and on the first board of directors. He flew a beautiful PJ-260 in aerobatics. Later,



*Jim Lacey, IAC #6, with his first Pitts S-1C, N310L.*



*John Lumley, IAC #8, in his PJ-260.*



*Jim Lacey, IAC #6, with his Pitts S-1S.*

*Tom Poberezny, IAC #7, gets a cockpit check in the new Pitts S-1T at Fond du Lac in 1977 from Bill Thomas. Bill had flown it in the World Championships in Kiev in 1976.*



*Frank Price and his beloved Bücker Jungmeister at the World Aerobatic Championships in Oshkosh in 1980.*



*Marion Cole, IAC #9, with a Stits Playboy – one of many aircraft he flew in air show performances.*



*The first transition of the IAC leadership in 1973: Verne Jobst, IAC #101 (incoming President); Bob Heuer, IAC #2 (outgoing President); Mike Heuer, IAC #4 (incoming Vice President); and Don Taylor, IAC #3 (outgoing Vice President).*

he took up glider aerobatics; John was a member of several U.S. Glider Aerobic Teams in recent years. For several years, he also served as IAC's glider chairman and coordinated glider operations at the U.S. Nationals.

#### **MARION COLE – IAC 9**

One of the famous Cole Brothers, Marion was one of the most well-known air show pilots of all time and the personal hero of my father. A pilot who flew a 450 Stearman with incredible skill in the 1950s and a very capable mechanic who restored and modified his own airplanes, Marion left aerobatics for a few years but returned when he attended the EAA fly-in convention in the mid-1960s. He entered competition again in 1967 and qualified for the U.S. Aerobatic Team. Marion flew at the 1968 World Aerobatic Championships in Magdeburg, East Germany, in his highly modified Bücker Jungmann. He became a Pitts dealer and was the lead pilot for the first Red Devils aerobatic team with Gene Soucy and Bob Heuer. They debuted at the 1969 EAA fly-in convention in Rockford. Marion was the organizer of early aerobatic competitions in Monroe, Louisiana, and he went on to serve in the first IAC board of directors. Now retired from air show flying, Marion resides in Shreveport, Louisiana.

#### **FRANK PRICE – IAC 10**

Another one of the most colorful personalities of the sport, Frank Price was the first American to compete at a World Aerobatic Championships in



*Gene Soucy, Marion Cole (IAC #9), Bob Heuer (IAC #2), and Paul Poberezny (IAC #1) watch an air show performance at an EAA Benefit air show in Waukesha, Wisconsin in 1970. Gene, Marion, and Bob were the original members of the "Red Devils" aerobatic team, and performed at that air show.*

Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, in 1960. He flew his Great Lakes in the competition with little knowledge of European rules and judging criteria, and he was completely self-financed. Returning to the United States without his airplane because he had run out of money, he worked to raise the necessary cash to ship it back later. He later formed the American Tiger Club—an offshoot of the British Tiger Club—that was a very loosely formed organization of aerobatic pilots in the 1960s. He published the *Tiger Club*

News for many years, which kept everyone aware of developments in the sport during those pre-Internet days. Each year, Frank would organize "Tiger Days" in Waco, Texas, where most of the aerobatic pilots of the day would congregate, fly, and renew friendships. An air show pilot for many years, Frank was a

devotee of the Bücker Jungmeister after seeing it fly in Europe. At one time, he sold plans for the airplane and was also the sole distributor of the Aresti catalogue in the United States, a result of his early ties with Jose L. Aresti of Spain. Frank passed away a few years ago; the

last time this author saw him was at the 1996 World Aerobatic Championships in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Of course, there were others there at the beginning whom we'll discuss in future articles. The formation

of IAC was a confluence of ideas, personalities, and events that likely couldn't be duplicated again. In the first couple of decades, there was turmoil as the organization matured and its role in the sport aviation world became clear and defined. In 1982, IAC assumed the mantle of responsibilities for all of aerobatics

in the United States to include the U.S. Nationals and U.S. Aerobatic Teams after wresting these responsibilities from the Aerobatic Club of America and becoming a new division of the National Aeronautic Association in Washington, D.C., and ultimately responsible to the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale.

Ultimately, more than 1,000 people joined IAC that first year. We reached our peak of more than 6,000 members a few years ago under the administration of IAC President Doug McConnell, another early member (IAC 862). Since then, with the rising costs of aircraft, fuel, insurance, and the recent recession, membership has suffered. But what has remained are the core ideas and programs that came into being in 1970 and 1971—and as sport aviation resumes its growth in the future, I'm confident IAC will as well.

In the next part, I'll describe how the sport developed and give some more reports on those people who made it happen. **IAC**

## The formation of IAC was a confluence of ideas, personalities, and events that likely could not be duplicated again.

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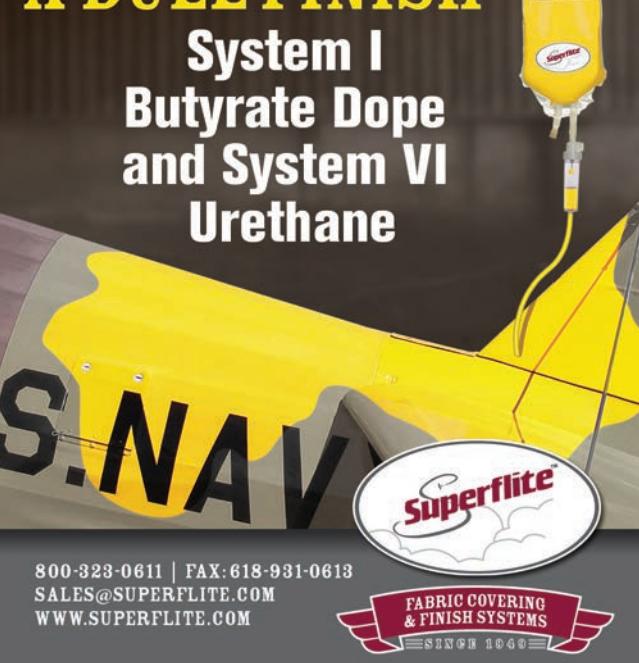


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# The Decathlon on its *40th Anniversary*

BY DOUG MCCONNELL





**IT'S NO COINCIDENCE THAT** the International Aerobatic Club and the Decathlon are both celebrating their 40th anniversaries this year. They both took wing at a time (1970) when interest in aerobatic flight was sweeping the country. The IAC provided the organizational structure while the Decathlon offered an outstanding and economical factory-produced aerobatic mount for both training and personal fun—and they've fit nicely together ever since!

But the Decathlon story had its genesis prior to 1970. We can thank Champion Aircraft Company of Osceola, Wisconsin, for that! It owned the rights to the 7-series Aeronca Champ and had been building a number of variants of the Champ going back to 1959. In the early '60s, the company decided to create an aerobatic version, and in 1964 it introduced the Citabria ("airbatic" spelled backward).

Before the Citabria, aerobatics were performed in a variety of aging military trainers, a few sport aircraft from the '30s, and an occasional homebuilt. Competition aerobatics were primarily among (many famous) air show performers since they were the few who had access to the modified trainers as featured during their air shows around the country. Most of the aerobatic knowledgeable pilots had learned



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"And the Decathlon is easy to fly. The balanced controls are light and responsive, so the plane handles real-well in both inside and outside maneuvers. Sustained inverted flight is easy, too. For the money, I think the Decathlon is just one heck of a good airplane . . . and you can quote me on that."

**Champion Decathlon: Not a machine . . . an experience.**

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## DECATHLON



Gene Soucy, age 25, is the first pilot to win the U.S. National Aerobatic Championship three consecutive times (1970-72). During those same three years, he also won the Canadian National Championships. In 1972, he finished third overall in helping the U.S. men's team finish in first place at the World Aerobatic Championships in Salon de Provence, France.

Gene Soucy with the 1970 Decathlon launch.



*Champion Decathlon*

their skills from military pilot training. But the introduction of the Citabria in 1964 changed all that!

In my case, in the late '50s I had obtained my private pilot certificate during high school in a Piper PA-18 Super Cub. It was a very windy location (Ellensburg, Washington), so I was "very" tailwheel qualified from the start! I had one early (and *stupid*) experiment of trying to teach myself aerobatics by attempting to perform a loop in a Navy N3N-3 biplane—from 80 mph cruise! (Take it from me—it's a real bad idea to try to teach yourself aerobatics!) I later learned military-style aerobatics in the T-34A and T-28A while at the U.S Air Force Academy and was

truly hooked. So when the chance to become a part owner of an aerobatic flight school came along in the late '60s, I jumped at it! Some readers of *Sport Aerobatics* may remember Flightways Sport Aviation located at the Oakland International Airport. We had five to 10 Citabria trainers active at all times and were very busy with recreational pilots seeking basic aerobatic knowledge. The new Citabria was the only aerobatic trainer in production and was being

featured in all the aviation magazines. This was the same time frame as when Cecilia Aragon operated from the nearby Nut Tree and Tracy airports. (See *In the Loop* e-newsletter, May and June 2010 issues.)

From my intimate knowledge of the Citabria, learned aerobatic skills, a marketing MBA, and years of Citabria dealer sales, I was pleased and honored when

Champion Aircraft Company offered me the position of marketing and sales vice president in 1970. By this time, hundreds of Citabrias had been delivered, and a huge number of recreational pilots had become qualified and

*The Decathlon was born from the need for an enhanced aerobatic trainer offering improvements over the very successful Citabria. ☆*

enthusiastic about aerobatics. I also had the good fortune to be selected as the company air show pilot and factory production and experimental pilot. Thus the stage was set for my involvement with the Decathlon.

The Decathlon was born from the need for an enhanced aerobatic trainer offering improvements over the very successful Citabria. As most readers know, the Citabria is basically a souped-up Champ with the addition of aerobatic

equipment items. The original 7AC Champ was certified in 1940 under Civil Air Regulations (CAR) 3 (certified for +5/-2.5g). It was designed for 65 to 85 hp and cruised around 80 mph. It was (and is) delightful and easy to fly. But as with the Citabria, the Champ blossomed with 115 to 150 hp, and cruise increased to 125 mph. At that speed, the ailerons stiffened from the additional air pressure, which was no problem for cross-country cruise but rather tiring for extensive aerobatic sessions. In addition, only one model of the Citabria (7KCAB) had an inverted system (fuel and oil for inverted flight), and that system was limited by the "one-shot" oil supply. As the aircraft inverted, trapdoors would close inside the oil pan and a "flop tube" would follow the trapped oil and provide engine oil pressure until the oil pan had been pumped dry (varied from a few seconds to a minute depending on the effectiveness of the gravity-activated trapdoors). In addition, the high-lift wing of the Citabria made inverted flight interesting, requiring some muscle, good arm reach, and experience to hold the nose well above the horizon for sustained level inverted flight. And finally, the fixed-pitch prop required that the pilot throttle back during downlines to avoid engine overspeed, but this reduced the ability to maintain energy for the next aerobatic



*ABOVE: Experimental "Pro" used to test the symmetrical airfoil to be used on the Decathlon. UPPER RIGHT: American Champion President Jerry Melhoff today. LOWER RIGHT: President Jerry Melhoff (left) and Doug McConnell (right) deliver the first Super Decathlon to IAC Chapter One's "Alpha Charlie" club in 1991.*

figure. The flying community was ready for something better.

Some may not be aware that the first use of the near-symmetrical wing and 180 hp/constant-speed prop, as featured on the Super Decathlon, were first employed on an open cockpit Citabria... yes, open cockpit! It was a one-off experimental parasol version of the Citabria

and was named the "Pro." It was built during the late '60s and test-evaluated for possible marketing. I had the pleasure of flying it all across the United States for several hundred hours. It flew like a Super Decathlon but with a huge wind all around! It was decided that an enclosed cabin had much better potential for the North American mass

market, so the Pro was sentenced to be burned by the factory. I prevailed (on my knees) in saving this unique aircraft from the burn pile and had it donated to the EAA AirVenture Museum in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. It was later auctioned off and has had two subsequent owners. (See *Air Progress* magazine, November 1968.)

When I arrived at Champion Aircraft in 1970, the first prototype of the Decathlon had been built and early testing conducted. To make all of the design changes requested from early Citabria experience, a completely new certification was needed. So the prototype was redesigned to conform to the modern standards for aerobatic aircraft as specified



in FAR 23. Included were the new near-symmetrical (with shortened span) wing, streamlined ailerons, tall control stick or added leverage, continuous inverted oil supply, adjustable seat, and constant-speed prop. Struts and structures were all beefed up to meet the higher +6/-3g certification standard (empty weight increased from approximately 1,110 pounds to 1,320 pounds due to the extra beef and componentry).

The new prototype was finally certified in late 1970. I had the pleasure of performing the final stages of flight test and creating the marketing launch plans. But the prototype still had no name! I felt that since we were targeting the new crowd of enthusiastic pilots who loved aerobatics and were joining the IAC in impressive numbers, the name should imply "readiness for competition"; my thoughts turned to the Olympic Games, which are synonymous with "competition." At first I considered the "Olympian" but learned that Champion Aircraft had already used that name on an earlier normal category variant. Then I thought about the most demanding event at the Olympics, and "Decathlon" shot into view. I selected Decathlon for the name, designed the introductory red, white, and blue air show paint scheme, and the rest is history! To take the prototype around to all the air shows and IAC events, I hired a



*American Champion Aircraft, located in Rochester, Wisconsin, frame assembly line.*



*Comparison of high-lift Citabria wing shape (top) and semi-symmetrical Decathlon wing (bottom).*



LEFT: Author Doug McConnell. ABOVE: American Champion final assembly area.

little known but promising (and very young) pilot by the name of Gene Soucy—some of you may have heard of him? He was featured in our early advertising with the Decathlon and gained lots of early exposure. Another pilot who I hired to fly the Super Viking at air shows also occasionally demonstrated the Decathlon, too. His name was Bobby (now Bob) Bishop, another very young aerobatic phenom who later also rose to air show greatness.

Those early days were exciting for all who were involved, and even now we all

enjoy seeing the Decathlon still in production and receiving continuous improvements and upgrades. It has been designated one of the 10 most successful aircraft ever produced and can still be purchased factory-new from American Champion Aircraft in Rochester, Wisconsin. To date, about 1,096 Decathlons and Super Decathlons have been produced, with the first 300 being the original 150-hp version. Since American Champion took over production, all have received the very successful metal spar along with other

improvements and options such as a composite three-blade prop. American Champion's now-20-year production run of the Decathlon and Super Decathlon and dedication to continuous improvement have made the aircraft truly exceptional. Many happy owners regularly bring their aircraft back to the factory to

get the latest enhancements as well as upgrades. The factory offers retrofits of the new metal spar wing and other improvements (while you wait) to all owners of earlier Citabria, Decathlon, Scout, and Champ models.

American Champion is a true manufacturer with a huge investment in complex precision machining centers and manufacturing tooling. Its excellent quality and focus on customer satisfaction are unparalleled and great assets for the future of recreational aerobatics as well as the future of the IAC. **IAC**

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## Mishap Reports

// NTSB Identification: **WPR10LA130**

14 CFR Part 91: General Aviation  
Accident occurred Sunday, February 7,  
2010, in Mesa, Arizona.

Aircraft: Nanchang China CJ-6  
Injuries: 1 Minor, 1 Uninjured

*This is preliminary information, subject to change, and may contain errors.  
Any errors in this report will be corrected when the final report has been completed.*

**ON FEBRUARY 7, 2010**, about 0840 Mountain Standard Time, a Nanchang China CJ-6, N6263D, experienced a loss of engine power and force landed in a park near Falcon Field Airport, Mesa, Arizona. The pilot was operating the airplane under the provisions of Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 91. The certificated commercial pilot was not injured, and the passenger sustained minor injuries. The airplane sustained substantial damage. The local flight departed Falcon Field, about 0800. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and no flight plan had been filed.

According to the pilot, about 30 minutes into what was planned to be a

45-minute flight, he began to feel the engine vibrating. He then turned the airplane back to Falcon Field, and as they joined the downwind leg he heard a loud "bang." The engine then lost power, such that it was no longer able to maintain altitude. The pilot then made a 180-degree turn with the intention of landing in an adjacent park. During the final approach, he observed someone walking on his intended landing area; he banked the airplane to the left and landed, during the ground roll the airplane collided with a restroom facility on the park property.

During the Accident Sequence, the right wing, firewall, and forward fuselage structure sustained substantial damage.

**"... as they joined the downwind leg he heard a loud "bang."**

**MISHAPS by MONTH:  
2010**

	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>	<b>Apr</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>
<b>Accidents</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Fatalities</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>

// NTSB Identification: CEN10LA198  
 14 CFR Part 91: General Aviation  
 Accident occurred Tuesday,  
 February 23, 2010, in Greeley,  
 Colorado.  
 Aircraft: American Champion  
 7KCAB; Injuries: 1 Uninjured

**ON FEBRUARY 23, 2010**, approximately 1500 Mountain Standard Time, a Champion 7KCAB, N5065X, registered to and operated by the private pilot, was substantially damaged when the fabric on the upper right wing tore off while the airplane was being maneuvered near Greeley, Colorado. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time of the accident. The personal flight was being conducted under the provisions of Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 without a flight plan. The pilot, the sole occupant, was not injured. The local flight originated at Greeley at approximately 1430.

// NTSB Identification: CEN10LA295  
 14 CFR Part 91: General Aviation  
 Accident occurred Saturday, May 29, 2010, in Amarillo, Texas.

**"Moments later  
 the airplane  
 was engulfed  
 in flames."**

Aircraft: Pitts Aerobatics S-2B;  
 Injuries: 1 Minor

*This is preliminary information, subject to change, and may contain errors. Any errors in this report will be corrected when the final report has been completed.*

**ON MAY 29, 2010**, about 1854 Central Daylight Time, a Pitts Aerobatics S-2B airplane, N260PK, was destroyed by fire during a post-maintenance flight at the Blue Sky Airfield (2TX0), in Amarillo, Texas. The pilot, the sole occupant, sustained minor injuries. The airplane was registered to and operated by the pilot. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and no flight plan was filed for the 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 local flight. The flight originated moments before the accident.

Reportedly, the purpose of the flight was a test flight following an engine tear-down, inspection, and reinstallation. During the initial climb, while at an altitude of 700 feet above ground level, the engine experienced a partial loss of power. The pilot initiated a 180-degree turn and performed a downwind landing on the runway he had just departed from. Following the landing, and while taxiing, the pilot observed flames emanating from the engine cowling area. The pilot shut down the engine and exited the airplane. Moments later the airplane was engulfed in flames.

The airplane was recovered to secure storage for further examination. **IAC**

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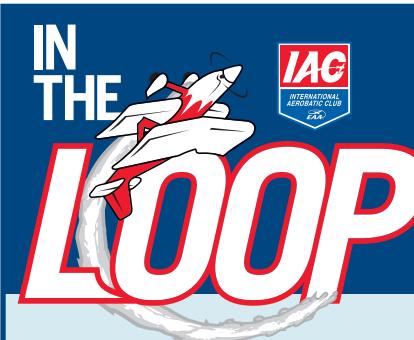
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## CONTEST CALENDAR



Mark your calendars for these upcoming events. A complete list and the latest calendar are at [www.IAC.org](http://www.IAC.org).

And if you're hosting a contest, let the world know by posting it there!

### // **Kathy Jaffe Challenge** (Northeast)

**Friday, August 6 – Sunday, August 8, 2010**

**Location:** Flying W Airport Resort (N14): Lumberton, NJ

**Tel:** 732-671-6483 • **E-Mail:** [bubbaron@comcast.net](mailto:bubbaron@comcast.net)

**Website:** [www.iac52.org](http://www.iac52.org)

### // **Hill Country Hammerfest** (South Central)

**Friday, August 6 – Saturday, August 7, 2010**

**Location:** Llano Municipal (AQO): Llano, TX

**Tel:** 512-497-9656 • **E-Mail:** [acroguy@aol.com](mailto:acroguy@aol.com)

### // **Hoosier Hoedown** (Mid-America)

**Saturday, August 7 – Sunday, August 8, 2010**

**Location:** Kokomo Municipal Airport (OKK): Kokomo, IA

**Tel:** 765-864-0096 • **E-Mail:** [mike.wild@comcast.net](mailto:mike.wild@comcast.net)

**Website:** [www.hoosierhammerheads.org](http://www.hoosierhammerheads.org)

### // **Beaver State Regional Championship** (Northwest)

**Friday, August 13 – Saturday, August 14, 2010**

**Location:** Eastern Oregon Regional At Pendleton (PDT): Pendleton, OR

**Tel:** 503-472-8017 • **E-Mail:** [flyhran@aol.com](mailto:flyhran@aol.com)

### // **Doug Yost Challenge** (Mid-America)

**Saturday, August 14 – Sunday, August 15, 2010**

**Location:** Spencer Municipal Airport (KSPW): Spencer, IA

**Tel:** 712-335-0744 • **E-Mail:** [Aaron.mccartan@gmail.com](mailto:Aaron.mccartan@gmail.com)

**Website:** [www.iac78.org](http://www.iac78.org)

### // **Harold Neumann Barnstormer** (South Central)

**Saturday, August 28 – Sunday, August 29, 2010**

**Location:** New Century AirCenter (KIXD): New Century, KS

**Tel:** (913) 369-5569 • **E-Mail:** [Grant.Wittenborn@gmail.com](mailto:Grant.Wittenborn@gmail.com)

**Website:** [www.iac15.org](http://www.iac15.org)

### // **East Coast Aerobatic Contest** (Northeast)

**Friday, September 3 – Sunday, September 5, 2010**

**Location:** Warrenton-Fauquier Airport (KHWY): Midland, VA

**Tel:** 703-618-4132 • **E-Mail:** [s.francis@ieee.or](mailto:s.francis@ieee.or)

### // **Happiness is Delano 2010** (Southwest)

**Saturday, September 4 – Sunday, September 5, 2010**

**Location:** Delano Municipal Airport (KDLO): Delano, CA

**Tel:** 661-917-4573 • **E-Mail:** [ijkhowell\\_1954@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ijkhowell_1954@sbcglobal.net)

**Website:** [www.IACChapter26.org](http://www.IACChapter26.org)

### // **"Apple Turnover"** (Northwest)

**Friday, September 10 – Saturday, September 11, 2010**

**Location:** Ephrata Municipal Airport (KEPH): Ephrata, WA

**Tel:** 425-985-9469 • **E-Mail:** [JRiedinger@perkinscoie.com](mailto:JRiedinger@perkinscoie.com)

**Website:** [www.AppleTOver.com](http://www.AppleTOver.com)

### // **U. S. National Aerobatic Championships (US Nationals)**

**Sunday, September 19 – Friday, September 24, 2010**

**Location:** North Texas Regional Airport (KGYI): Sherman/Denison, TX

**Tel:** (914) 456-1594 • **E-Mail:** [doug@wbreeze.com](mailto:doug@wbreeze.com)

**Website:** [www.iacusn.org/USN2010/](http://www.iacusn.org/USN2010/)

### // **Mason Dixon Clash** (Northeast)

**Friday, October 8 – Saturday, October 9, 2010**

**Location:** Farmville (KFVX): Farmville, VA

**E-Mail:** [RandTAviation@ec.rr.com](mailto:RandTAviation@ec.rr.com)

### // **Rocky Mountain Invitational Aerobatic Contest** (South Central)

**Saturday, October 9 – Sunday, October 10, 2010**

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

**Tel:** 303-648-0130 • **E-Mail:** [JamieTreat@q.com](mailto:JamieTreat@q.com)

**Website:** [www.IAC5.ORG](http://www.IAC5.ORG)

### // **Tequila Cup** (Southwest)

**Friday, November 12 – Saturday, November 13, 2010**

**Location:** Marana NW Regional Airport (AVQ): Marana, AZ

**Tel:** 603-860-4456 • **E-Mail:** [tequilacup@gmail.com](mailto:tequilacup@gmail.com)

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## Pack for Shipping

**Q: I JUST PRACTICED** pulling my rip cord. How do I package the spring-loaded pilot chute for shipping?

**A: IT'S A GREAT** idea to practice pulling your rip cord before sending your parachute for repack and recertification. The challenge is in packaging up that giant jack-in-the-box (aka, pilot chute) that just popped out of your parachute. This was addressed briefly in my April 2007 column, but I want to expand on it (no pun intended). Your shipping box fits the parachute just fine when the pilot chute is compressed, but it's a different story once the rip cord is pulled. Some owners have asked if it's okay just to cram the pilot chute into the box. This is not the best solution since it could bend the spring and ruin the pilot chute. (They are expensive to replace.) You also run the risk of setting a booby trap for your rigger when he or she opens the box. It's a fun prank, but remember that your parachute rigger will always get the last laugh. To quote Charles Plumb, the naval aviator whose story has made its way around the Internet several times, "Remember who packs your parachute!"

There are several ways to package the pilot chute for shipping. One method is to compress it into some plastic bags from the supermarket and tape it shut (see photos 1 and 2). You may require a third hand to help you accomplish this feat, or at least someone to record your attempts on video. You may not get the pilot chute compressed, but you will be a hit on YouTube. Just be careful and protect your face and breakables

while you're doing this. If you use tape, be very careful not to get any on the pilot chute material. For that matter, make sure tape doesn't get on any part of your parachute, including the harness. Glue from the tape will damage nylon material over time. You can also close the bags with string or plastic ties, or you can wrap the bridle (the long, 1-inch-wide piece of nylon that attaches the pilot chute to the top of the parachute) around the bag (see photo 3). A similar method is to use a small box in place of the plastic bags.

Some people have even managed to compress the pilot chute back into the open parachute container. Then just close the side flaps of the container back over the pilot chute and tie the container shut with string or rope.

You may decide not to do battle with the pilot chute at all and just get a bigger box, laying the pilot chute on top of the parachute. Be careful because this leaves a lot of empty space in the box and makes it vulnerable to crushing during shipment. This can damage the spring of the pilot chute or even the parachute itself. Never fill the empty space of the box with loose Styrofoam chips. They cause all sorts of problems, not the least of which is aggravating your rigger who will have to spend hours fishing Styrofoam chips out of every nook and cranny of your parachute. If you do use Styrofoam chips, put them into a separate sealed bag first.

All of these methods work well. Whatever you decide to do, be sure not to snag or pinch any of the material. **IAC**



**Remember,  
things don't always go  
according to plan!**



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