



Chapter 1344

P.O. Box 582

McPherson, Kansas 67460

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Chapter Meeting

02-15-07 7 p.m.
McPherson Airport

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WHERE IS THE SPRING?

Well, as much as I like snow and cold, it's getting to the time of the year where I'm ready for some warmer days to melt the snow. Icy slick runways don't make for a good flight experience unless you happen to have skis. And skis in our neck of the woods are worth about as much as snowmobiles in the most recent years. Hopefully, all y'all have had a good month and maybe even got in a few minutes, or hours, of flying.

Well, my wife and I have been watching the housing market for many months now, and hoping to find a place with a shop or room to build a shop. We have finally found a place, and if all goes well should be moving about the end of March or the first part of April. Naturally, Tom S. was the first person I told since he's been so helpful in so many ways and is also in need of a larger place to work on his Pietenpol. He says a heated shop will be a delight. I'll keep all y'all updated on the prospective move.

With everything else that has been happening, I've been working two part-time jobs on a substitute basis and haven't had much time for aviation things. So, this newsletter is a bit stunted and I hope I'll be forgiven. With the technical difficulties I've been experiencing with a new flash drive, I haven't even

gotten the latest pictures of Russell M's Sonex to Tom for posting to the Chapter website. Will try to get those to you soon, Tom.

Dave B, Warren H, Mike B, Tom S and myself have been working on schedules for meeting programs. Tom S will tell us about his Pietenpol this month, and I trust that all y'all will be there to hear about it.

I currently have a copy of the "Van's Aircraft" story as does Warren H, and will soon have some tapes from Rans in Hays, too, if anyone is interested in looking at them.

See all y'all at the meeting.

Area Events

1st Saturday of every month – Ponca City Airport Pancake Breakfast (PNC)

2nd Saturday of every month – Beaumont Hotel (SN07) All-You-Can-Eat Pancake Breakfast

2nd Saturday of every month – Lufkin, TX (LFK) Fajita Fly-in 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Angelina County Airport

3rd Saturday of every month – Alva Regional (AVK) Alva, OK

4th Saturday of every month – Augusta Municipal (3AU)

4th Saturday of every month – EAA Chapter 455 Fly-in Breakfast at Enid Woodring Regional (WDG) from 8:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

March 17, 2007 - 18th Annual Mary Kely Wild Onions'n Eggs Fly-in Tenkiller Airpark (44M)
918.457.4705 dmstephen@hughes.net

March 31, 2007 - Draughon-Miller Central Texas Regional (TPL) Temple, TX Pancake Breakfast @ Civil Air Patrol, 8 a.m. 254.718.4910 ltcrkbrown@hotmail.rr.com

April 14, 2007 - Burnet Municipal Kate Craddock Field (BMQ) CAF Bluebonnet Airshow

This comes from a search and rescue pilot at Canadian Forces Base in Bagotville, Quebec. It happened late one night during bad weather, as heard over the tower radio:

Helicopter pilot: Roger, I'm holding at 3,000 feet over the beacon.

Second voice: (Panic in voice) No, you can't be doing that...I'm holding at 3,000 feet over that beacon.

Helicopter pilot: (Short pause) You idiot, you're my copilot.

Confessions of an Airplane Nut

Part 6

I started this quixotic tale by listing several of the waypoints that needed to be accomplished before I could call this phase of my life behind me. One of those waypoints was to acquire my “Airman Certificate” under the category “Airplane Single Engine Land.” Well, of course, I have now accomplished that so on to the next goal.

I can’t believe you bought that! There was absolutely NOTHING ho hum about getting that sign-off from my FAA certified examiner. In fact I would have sworn that he was going to kick me out of the plane and tell me to go find some less destructive way to end my days. Now I know, looking back, that my flying wasn’t horrible – but it wasn’t my best either. I also know that the examiner’s job includes upping the stress level so he can gauge the pilot’s reactions. He did very well at that without being “over the top.” Finally, I know that mommy nature was doing her best to give me some tasks that would show my examiner just how good I really am. Let’s just say that I did not impress myself, let alone my examiner. (I will say that it is not nearly so much fun sliding around on snow and ice in an airplane as it is in a car.) In any event, however, I was just a bit surprised after we finally got parked when he said; “OK, you get the airplane all tidied up and meet me upstairs where I’ll be doing the paperwork to turn you into a pilot.” I believe that I replied suavely with; “You’re kidding, right?”

Now I find myself pulling that little piece of paper out of my wallet at odd moments and just staring at it. I can’t wait to have that paper replaced by another of those ubiquitous pieces of plastic that make carrying my wallet so painful at times. Humans can be weird that way, I guess. Anyway, I am just starting to realize how much of a debt of gratitude I owe to my two flight instructors, Janine and Dan, and one very patient instructor in his own right, Bill Gross. I have memories of that flight that I know I will treasure forever. Next step in that direction – tailwheel endorsement. How hard can that be? (I know, DON’T TEMPT FATE!)

A while back I intimated that flying was expensive. True. Building an airplane is expensive too but can be kept manageable so long as my eyes aren’t allowed to get bigger than my stomach – so to speak. (I really need to stop reading all the advertisements for wonder widgets in those airplane magazines I subscribe to.) I told you that I could not afford to take flying lessons at the same time that my building was progressing. Also true, but that didn’t keep me entirely out of the shop. Nor did it keep me from finding things at that great airplane supply facility – eBay. I did manage to acquire some motorcycle wheel rims, an altimeter, a flight bag, and an old handheld aviation radio (thanks Jerry) during this period. Now that every minute isn’t being spent either flying or studying I can actually begin to make some progress building as well.

So far I have hanging in the shop the complete tail group (empennage to those of you in the know), a complete set of wing ribs, a half-finished propeller, and a torn-down and cleaned-up Corvair engine. Also in the shop is the remainder of the Air Camper wood kit which was acquired early on from Aircraft Spruce and Specialties. After one weekend in the shop I can add to that list a leveled and squared up 16’ work table upon which to assemble the fuselage. The process for this is just the same as the wing ribs or empennage pieces, just at a much larger scale.

The Pietenpol Air Camper is of wood construction with just a few items made from metal. This is a little intimidating at first when you start to think of how much stress all of these parts have to take and yet all of the joints are just but joints with gusset plates added for strength. The intimidation factor decreases somewhat when you start to remember the total numbers of airplanes that have been built this way over the years. Heavens, the DeHaviland Mosquito was a 300+ MPH WWII fighter of all wood construction and falling to pieces in the air was not what it was known for.

Wood is light, immensely strong, and normally fails in such a way as to give fair warning of that failure in time to do something about it. Modern construction adhesives, and for that matter those used in the early days of flight, create joints that are stronger than the surrounding wood if the instructions for their use are obeyed. Just like any other aircraft construction material, wood must be treated with respect, properly protected against moisture, not modified in ways that reduce strength at critical places or create loads beyond what the structure can stand. Inspection hatches must be placed in key locations so that structure and attachments can be inspected or worked on as needed. (i.e. just like any other method of construction) AND, some protection against termites needs to be devised.

One of the great things about being involved in a project like this is the camaraderie that develops among like minded individuals. Just getting involved with airplanes in general has introduced me to a number of interesting individuals that I probably would never have met otherwise. Some of these folks are builders, some are flyers, and some are what I was just a few short days ago – bonafide airplane nuts. Without those contacts this project would have become a boring routine in a relatively short period. In addition, without those contacts I would be entirely dependent upon my own skills and knowledge – not a particularly intelligent way to build something as complicated as an airplane.

So, without getting all maudlin about it, I want to end this chapter with a few words of thanks to some folks who have been instrumental in my getting this far along. Thanks Janine and Dan for all the time and frustration you went through to get me on that check ride. Thanks Mr. Gross for seeing beyond my ham-fisted flying to the little kid inside who still has stars in his eyes. Thanks to my sons Matt and Justin for your encouragement and help. And a special thanks to the many members of EAA Chapter 1344 for your companionship, knowledge, and constant encouragement, and especially the opportunity to spend time around real machines that fly.

Tom Stinemetze -- The Airplane Nut

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