

...Contact!



March 2022



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President's Column

Paul Lastrucci



Greetings!

Happy to report that the EAA received a no findings audit for the annual ARO renewal which is due annually, and documents our compliance and own structure to monitor and carry out our own oversight in terms of the SA CAA Part 149 regulations governing what we do.

The EAA in South Africa does not and has no responsibility to adopt any role as the regulator, like issuing licenses or airworthiness ATF's etc., this is the job of the CAA and does not encumber any liability to the EAA member thus holding the EAA accountable for any flouting of the SA CAA rules etc.. Our responsibility is largely around the own governance of our safety as an organization and we have the input to ensure we are not strong armed into any unreasonable matter as the EAA.

It is clearly defined in the Chapter Charter from the USA that the EAA in any country does not become the regulator for its members. In a nutshell we comply with the EAA rules as well as the rules governing NTCA aircraft as provided in the SA CAA regulations operating an NTCA aircraft in this country.

This month I will provide a brief introduction as to what the EAA Aviation Recreation Organisation (ARO) is and how it integrates as to what we do as a Special Interest Group.

The EAA in South Africa, like our principal in the USA, operates, fosters and promotes aviation primarily in the domain of the amateur home builder, aviation enthusiast and amateur aircraft design and piloting of non-type certified, vintage, ex-military aircraft and helicopters.

It also provides input on a vast array of related issues and is incumbent on the EAA executive committee elected at the time to tabulate, issue and review a Quality Assurance System process in compliance with Part 149.02.3. of our local civil aviation regulations, this is technically what the ARO is made up of.

It's similar as the Advocacy section of the EAA USA that provides input into the FAA on all matters experimental and amateur built aircraft in the USA. In this country we also work along with the Aero Club and its sections on any advocacy issue from our SA CAA that may affect us as a section.

The content of the ARO requirement is to have a few measurable items in place that we review and report on bi annually and in conjunction with a SA CAA delegation that provide the audit oversight. It is then renewed annually following an audit.

It consists of the following:

An internal (QAS) Quality Assurance System:

The EAA requires of its members to remain compliant of the SA CAA CARs and relevant CATS documents pertaining to safe operation of Experimental and Amateur built aircraft within the EAA ARO operations, to ensure the requisite level of quality is maintained as indicated in 149.02.3

This QAS is to ensure applicable compliance, monitoring, recording and to include the dissemination of any findings to promote safe and informative operations within the EAA of SA and its Chapters, thus providing compliance with CARS 149.02.3 (1) (2) and CATS 149.02.3 (1). of this regulation.

This is reviewed at the EAA monthly meetings, and where necessary any matters of advocacy and compliance that are table as an agenda item and minuted. In the remote chance of any issue not being resolved (haven't had one yet) at time of meeting, further consultation will be determined

and escalated for further intervention to ensure appropriate measures are in place to maintain compliance.

QAS Internal Reviews:

We have a procedure within the ARO to record and communicate any findings. These are recorded as part of the EAA of SA Exco and EAA Chapter Minutes if applicable, and corrections then will be communicated at the relevant Exco and Chapter Meeting. A log is kept for audit purposes.

Dependant on any findings, the EAA Exco (management) will exercise analysis and provide workable and measurable review to be shared with the EAA members to ensure compliance. This will be circulated to the EAA exco and the regulator where necessary or tabled at the monthly EAA Chapter meetings and ratified at the EAA of SA Exco meeting for record and audit purposes.

Responsible Persons:

Is reviewed at yearly EAA AGM when office bearers rotate or stand down:

as per EAA Exco: Currently this is your EAA president, and is ably assisted by Marie Reddy, David Toma and Nigel Musgrave on all matters safety. Huge thanks to especially Marie who provides and maintains the discussion documentation in an accurate and up to date format that has ensured since the ARO inception that there have been no findings.

Dependant on any findings the EAA Exco (management) will exercise analysis and provide workable and measurable review to be shared with the EAA members to ensure compliance. This will be circulated to the EAA exco and the regulator as well as tabled at the monthly EAA Chapter meetings and ratified at the EAA of SA Exco meeting for record and audit purposes.

This is just a brief overview of how we fit into the Part 149 ARO requirement to ensure that our members remain compliant of this Part so that we can continue to traverse the skies of sunny South Africa and beyond without any sky police spoiling the fun.

Stay Safe
Paul

**RENEWAL
REMINDER**

It's time to renew our EAA Memberships!

Membership fees have stayed unchanged for the past 3 years and will once again remain the same! EAA and Aeroclub are committed to protecting our freedom to fly – we need your help! By joining an EAA Chapter and EAA National you stand a chance to win a trip to Oshkosh 2023 in our MACH Rewards program! Draw to take place November 2022

[**CLICK HERE TO JOIN OR RENEW**](#) 



Coming Soon!



EAA's Private Viewing of the new Top Gun Maverick Date to be announced soon!



WANTED!

EAA Young Eagles Day 9th April



PILOTS • PLANES • MARSHALLS

We are looking for volunteers for our Young Eagles Day at Rhino Park Airfield on the 9th April 2022. If you can help, please e mail Keaton Perkins keatonperkins@hotmail.com

MACH Credits Apply!

Help introduce a new generation to aviation!

VRYHEID FLY-IN

6, 7 & 8 MAY

Vryheid Airfield

RWY 11-29

Altitude 3800Ft

Freq 120.2 (10nm inbound - Contact Tower)

Gnd 123.45

Camping overnight and ablutions on field

2 Live Bands

Beer Garden

Vintage Cars on Display (150+ vehicles)

Vintage Tractors, Static Engines, Various Exhibitors,

Kiddies Entertainment Area, 4x4 Track and Display

Area, Aerobatic Aircraft Display, Food Stalls

CONTACT:

harvie@dalesvanheerden.co.za / morne@lmsbrokers.co.za

Chapter 322 February - Zoom & Face to Face Gathering



Wednesday 2nd February 2022

At last! It was time to get back to “face to face” gatherings. With Covid numbers rapidly declining and restrictions relaxed, there was no excuse this time to go virtual only.

The set up team moved in the week before to clean up the auditorium and check sound and hybrid zoom systems, but what a shock! Due to the heavy rains encountered over January, the place had been flooded. There was much damage to sound systems and other EAA equipment. But, as the saying goes “when the going gets tough, the tough get going” – true to EAA style it was decided not to let this hiccup get in the way. The auditorium was rapidly cleaned up and a sound system that was compatible with zoom was hired – it was all systems go!



Damaged EAA equipment

Members and friends were invited to attend the gathering at the auditorium and enjoy a boerie roll and a drink, or join the gathering on zoom. It was great to be able to enjoy this camaraderie once again – about 35 members attended the live option!



Pottie and Coen handled the braai

The hybrid system worked well – members at the auditorium were able to view the zoom side projected on the wall, and those at home could see the live happenings on their screens at home. Our first presenter for the evening was Mark Schaible Owner & President of Sonex Aircraft talking from a very cold Oshkosh, USA.

Mark outlined the various products Sonex manufacture and briefed us on their latest aircraft – the 2 seat Sonex Jet and the Sonex High Wing. Mark has recently bought the company after working there for years and is injecting fresh blood into this well-established company. Thank you Mark for this great presentation!



Mark Shaible – owner and president of Sonex



JSX-T-2, the 2-Place SubSonex jet rendering

Our safety talk for February took the form of a presentation by Jaco van der Westhuizen from Mayday SA, the subject – “Pilot’s Mental Health & Well Being”. Jaco delivered his talk via zoom in an interesting and humorous way,. Mental health is however a serious consideration when it comes to operating an aircraft safely and should not be ignored.

Mayday-SA was established in 2013 as a Section 21 Not-for-Profit Company to provide peer support to aviation licence holders needing help after an incident or accident or in times of stress due to performance issues, medical certification problems, and work and family relationship difficulties. Contact details for Mayday SA can be found [HERE](#)



Mike, Bruce and Jeff enjoying the camaraderie – something sorely missed during the Covid crisis

Many thanks to all who attended – in person at the auditorium or virtually on zoom, and a big thank you to all who helped make this happen – Pottie, Coen, Mike, Steve, Marie, let’s hope this is the start of a new chapter in 322 and we can get back to live gatherings and make more use of our great auditorium!

Boeremark Breakfast Fly-in

Aviators Paradise, Brits 12th February 2022

Over the upcoming year, Chapter 322 will be encouraging a monthly social flying activity (weather permitting!) and for February we linked up with the folks at Aviators Paradise for their February “Boeremark” day at their airfield.

Their clubhouse, Piper & Piper, named after the abandoned Piper Aztec and the founder’s bullmastiff, Piper, makes for a delightful venue with green lawns and view overlooking the runway. On the morning we woke up to beautiful flying weather, the first in a while up here on the highveld.



Ercoupe ZS VCE, based at Aviators, getting airborne – note the complete lack of clouds in the background!

A number of EAA members supported the event, these included many of the “usuals” – Karl Jensen, Sean Cronin, Ricardo De Bonis and Derek Hopkins.



Karl Jensen and Ron van Lear arriving in Karl's partly painted C 170

It was fun to walk amongst the many stalls set up on the airfield that were selling everything from avionics, perfume and coffee to kraft beers, clothing and waffles.

Following a tour of the stalls, we settled down to a sumptuous “boere” breakfast on the patio overlooking the runway.



The outdoor restaurant setting at Aviators



Karl checking out the headsets at Evans Aviation



Kevin and Ricardo arrived in Ricardo's Aircam

After a run of cancelled fly-ins due to bad weather, what could be better than sitting with friends at a beautiful airport enjoying a great breakfast! And all the rain – we must not complain too much, the landscape is looking so green and it really is a privilege to see this from the air!

What a great morning! Pity we had fly back without sampling some of the craft beers but we will be back for the next fly-in at Aviators.

Our March social fly-in is at Silver Creek on Saturday 12th March with a camp over on the Friday night. The Creek will lay on braai facilities and provide braai packs and drinks on request. They also have full ablution facilities for those camping over. At the time of writing, a number of members had already committed to the camp over. Make sure you don't miss it!



Derek and Hanlie in the RV8



Gidon, Sean and Martin

News from around the Globe

From Warren Butler, ex South African EAA'er now living in New Zealand



This was a fly-in to Leo John's strip at Mata, which is about 5nm south of Whangarei which is way north of Auckland. Takes around an hour in my plane. Beautiful day for it. Quite a good turnout from all over. A couple of Aeroprakts, a few Tecnams, some gyros, a Highlander and of course a Cherokee.



From Craig Ritson, ex South African EAA'er living in Rochester USA



I tried to fly this Citabria today but the breaking action on the runway was non-existent. Too much ice. Put it back!

PS – Craig will be here in South Africa next month, it will be great to see him!

**EAA Chapter 322 April Gathering
Face to Face and Shared on Zoom
EAA Auditorium Rand Airport
Wednesday 6th April 2022
17h30 for 18h30**



Be sure to catch the Hangar 51 Intl team in Stellenbosch for the Airshow on 25/26 March!

YOU'RE IN FOR A REAL TREAT



Ramp Inspection

Check List



Be prepared for a CAA Ramp Inspection – these inspections can be done anywhere and at any time! Below is a check list of what you should be carrying in your aircraft;

- Certificate of Registration:
- Certificate of Airworthiness: ATF
- Inspection Reminder:
- Compass Card: on the compass
- Pilot's checklist
- Are the signal strips in the aircraft?
- Certificate of Release to Service available:
- Radio station license or proof of last payment
- Approved Mass & Balance Sheet
- Equipment List
- SACAA Approved Aircraft Flight Manual
- Is the flight folio correctly filled in
- Check flight folio for outstanding defects: (If Yes What)
- Is a Map of the area available
- First aid kit, no expired medicine, required items
- Is a Fire extinguisher available, valid and correctly stowed
- Pilot license
- Valid Medical

EAA NATIONAL CONVENTION 2022



South Africa's BIGGEST GA Aviation Event!

22 to 24 April Middelburg Airfield

In conjunction with the Aero Club Aviation Week

Flying Competitions Aircraft Judging Camping on the airfield or Accommodation in town

Make sure you are there!

EAA National
President
Vice President
Treasurer
Secretary

Paul Lastrucci
David Toma
Mark Clulow
Keaton Perkins

Committee Members

Membership
Young Eagles
PRO
Website
Newsletter
Safety Officer
Finance Asst
AP Rep / Tech Officer
Auditorium

Mark Clulow
Keaton Perkins
Karl Jensen
Dean Fernandez
Neil Bowden
Nigel Musgrave
Brad Stephenson
Peter Lastrucci & Andy Lawrence
Marie Reddy

EAA Chapter 322

Meets 1st Wednesday of the month at the EAA Auditorium, Rand Airport

Chairman
Vice-Chairman
Treasurer
Secretary

Johannesburg
Neil Bowden
Sean Cronin
Mark Clulow
Ronell Myburgh

EAA Chapter 1502

Chairman
Vice-Chairman
Treasurer
Secretary

East London
Chapter 1262
Meets last Saturday of the month Wings Park
Chairman :
Vice-Chairman
Treasurer

Durban

Alan Lorimer
Russell Smith
Robbie Els
Mike Korck

Chapter 870
Chairman
Secretary / Treasurer
Committee Members

Kroonstad

Niel Terblanche
Hennie Roets
Johan Mouton & Carl Visagie

Chapter 788
Chairman
Vice-Chairman
Treasurer

Port Elizabeth

Brett Williams
Russell Phillips
Deon Swanepoel



Sometimes it is hard to stay motivated...

By Alan Evan-Hanes

The cat is out the bag, so to speak. After selling my beloved Super Cub everyone asked the obvious question what was it being replaced with? And the answer to that - kept me awake for many nights. Read on for the answer.

Selling the Cub was not really a problem, they are highly valued all over the world and fetch increasingly stupid money - you can buy an equally capable Piper Cruiser for nearly half the price.

I have always had a love hate relationships with Tiger Moths, spewing oil, awful handling, cold creature comforts and constant maintenance requirements.

But literally in the middle of the night I woke straight up and remembered the Falco. I have wanted one my whole life. I knew of one which I had salivated over during its construction but had never seen it at airshows nor heard of it since it was sold by the original builder. I called him and was soon put in touch with the current owner. The new owner had hardly flown it much since buying it and I persuaded him to sell.

So I am replacing my Super Cub with a Sequoia F8L Falco. Put simply, it is the very best aircraft in the world.

Stelio Frati was a mad Italian aircraft designer, who's designs are all seductively beautiful and have high performance for their power. He never married and only treated himself every Christmas day each year by taking half a day off away from his drawing board to attend church. He just preferred designing to anything else in life maybe except for his cats who were the only things he



allowed to invade his draughting board. This translates into rather exquisitely beautiful, precise works of art, if however excruciatingly complex designs. The Falco (Italian for Hawk) was his eighth design hence the ICAO designation F8L (Frati 8 Lycoming).

The Falco is a low wing two seat retractable sport aircraft that is fully aerobatic. It is built in the finest Italian woodmaking tradition using spruce and plywood, blended to make a shape that looks like an angelic Sophia Loren fused with an aerial Ferrari. Some 76 examples were produced in four production batches by Aviamilano, Aeromare and two by Laverda which are all highly prized possessions today. Frati later redesigned it in aluminium with a bigger 6 cylinder Lycoming that became the SF260 used by many air forces to this day. But it is not its good looks that attracted me and many others who have flown absolutely everything. It is the handling. It flies better than it

looks. Think of a de Havilland Chipmunk handling with Vans RV-7 performance.

Alfred Scott, a rather well to do Virginian bought the rights to market the plans under Sequoia Aircraft (named after a type of spruce tree) in the late 1970s and had them professionally redrafted to American specifications (SAE steel types, bolt sizes, tyres etc) by renowned Grumman aircraft designer David Thurston, but they did little to simplify its construction. For example one part of the engine mount has 9 parts where Piper uses 1! Exceptionally detailed engineering draft quality plans were sold and Boeing aircraft production quality kits followed. Some 101 examples of the plans/kit built examples have flown to date.

It is fully aerobatic, takes 2 people with 41kg of baggage, 800nm at 175knots. Very respectable performance for a 1955 design. To put it in perspective Piper were proud to have just released the Tripacer!

James Gilbert, editor of UK based Pilot magazine and author of many books had this to say *"All of Frati's designs are variations on a single theme; they all resemble each other, and each is instantly recognizable at a glance as "a Frati." They are finished as smoothly as mirrors, as though needless drag were more evil than the devil. They have the feel of tiny fighters, for you sit under a*

fighter pilot's sliding teardrop canopy, gripping a fighter pilot's stick, and the thing will be halfway round an aileron roll even before you've entirely made up your mind to do one. There is no superabundance of room in a Frati airplane, and they are all extremely noisy, but you will come down from your first flight in one with an unbelieving stare. It is much like the first time you ever drove a Ferrari; a damnation of all lesser vehicles for eternity. For the controls are so light, so delicate, the visibility so like falling free through space, and the airplane's stability even in turbulence so arrow-straight and intransmutable that you feel a fool for not knowing that light airplanes could be like this. The most beautiful of Frati's designs is perhaps the F.8L Super Falco"

Three Falco examples were started together in South Africa of which 2 have flown and the third started by EAA322 member Coen Plantinga is in my possession, half built (I lost my workshop in a divorce).

The first example is a true multi award winner built and flown by Dr Fanie Hendricks in Standerton. It would hold its own against any Oshkosh award winners easily. I was lucky enough to fly it and can confirm the stated performance figures. ZU-SCH still flies from Standerton regularly.

The second Falco ZU-BTT was built expertly by





I-ALDI, Italian example

Brian Nelson in Randburg who had a propeller depart en-route to Cape Town. He executed a perfect forced landing sans propellor and rebuilt it again shortly thereafter, then elected to give up flying following acrimonious disputes with the then AAID who published a wholly faulty accident report. He sold it to a pilot who for personal reasons never flew it much and I am extremely privileged to become its third owner. But sometimes it is hard to maintain enthusiasm.

My example is painted rather unusually in white house paint with a replica Zimbabwe airlines colour scheme. Most are rightly Ferrari Rosso Corsa Red. Brian did much detailed research before concluding that this would be the lightest weight protection for the wooden structure. He acknowledged that it might not be to everyone's liking but it was his plane and it was to his liking. It is not to my liking but to change it requires very careful sanding of 55sqm of the old paint, then applying a petticoat thin layer of modellers fibreglass with epoxy resin and repainting. Not a task for the sensible or those faint of heart. ZU-BTT has a fixed pitch wooden propeller which some early production examples carried, but this is akin to having your Jaguar E-Type stuck in second gear. You still have good performance but never getting anywhere near the best out of it.

I paid a deposit to secure the deal in August and set about selling the Super Cub (there were many eager buyers, I did not have to look too hard). I would only buy the Falco if it came with a current Authority to Fly (ATF) as it had been standing for a while, so the seller nominated a respected Approved Person (AP) to perform this task.

Between Covid inducing SACAA malaise and the AP it has taken 6 months to get an ATF issued.

I had previously flown this particular aircraft when

Brian Nelson offered me to accompany my test pilot brother Ian on one of the last development flights to assist with taking notes on gross weight performance. Under his expert supervision he allowed me to fly during which we performed a full conversion to type syllabus but did not complete the paperwork as the aircraft itself did not have an ATF on the day we did this flight. A decision I would later come to regret.

I contacted the SACAA to query on the availability of rated instructors. They replied with a suggestion that my brother is the ONLY candidate. I had to remind them that he no longer was an instructor as his instructors rating had lapsed. I read the regulations and wrote a motivation for a direct conversion to type as I had (in my opinion) enough total experience and on similar types. I got nowhere. I reread the regulations had offered them various options. After 5 months of email exchanges and various permutations they ecstatically replied with having found a suitable instructor – and offered my brother's details. We were going around in kindergarten musical chairs. Finally we agreed that Ian would rate Designated Flight Examiner and a fellow test pilot instructor Nigel Hopkins to fly it and he would in turn rate me (if you think this adds value and contributes to flight safety please drop me a line to explain it as I fail to understand it).

Finally we had a workable plan - except that on delivery, Ian had a knee operation and Nigel has been kidnapped by Boeing as their test pilot and is not in the country for 2 months! Sometimes you cannot easily win.

The Falco's current instruments were old vacuum operated stuff and replacing them was as stupid as it was extortionist. I looked around at glass cockpits but they were too beyond my impecuniness, although always on my ultimate wish list. At the Brits Fun-n-Sun I happened to walk past the Century Avionics stand on my way to genuinely buy a competitor's moving map option and just started chatting to Shane Sommerville. I noticed that their display stand was not the latest version of Garmin's offerings and right then and there I spent my next 10 years budget in panel upgrades. I have purchased a new panel and started collecting all the multitude of bits that make up a glass cockpit. The final item that ties it all together needed to come directly from Garmin – and guess what – they have no stock and the earliest I can even start assembling it is April! Grrrrr.

Then one starts to consider hull insurance. I contacted the insurers of the Super Cub to enquire about costs and received devastating feedback. They wanted 25%pa as premiums with a further 25% of hull value as minimum excess cover. This was simply beyond sensibility and affordability. In over 30 years of flying I have yet to scrape a wingtip, so I can only trust that the next 10 or so years will bring the same good fortune.

I had planned all through the purchase to upgrade the paint scheme, instruments and propellor but at the very last moment my partner pulled out. So it is all going to take so much, much longer than I ever thought it would.

Anyway, the good news is that it finally got delivered yesterday with an ATF and an oil leak.

Despite this all I still remain stupidly enthusiastic!

General characteristics	
Crew	One
Capacity	One passenger
Length	6.50 m (21 ft 4 in)
Wingspan	8.00 m (26 ft 3 in)
Height	2.27 m (7 ft 5 in)
Wing area	10.0 m ² (108 sq ft)
Aspect ratio	6.4:1
Airfoil	NACA 64213
Empty weight	550 kg (1,213 lb)
Max takeoff weight	820 kg (1,808 lb)
Fuel capacity	120 L (32 US gal; 26 imp gal)
Powerplant	Lycoming O-320-B1A air-cooled flat-four engine, 120 kW (160 hp)
Propellers	2-bladed Hartzell fixed-pitch propeller, 1.75 m (5 ft 9 in) diameter
Performance	
Maximum speed	325 km/h (202 mph, 175 kts) at sea level
Cruise speed	250 km/h (160 mph, 130 kts) (econ. cruise)
Stall speed	98 km/h (61 mph, 53 kts) (30% flaps)
Never exceed speed	385 km/h (239 mph, 208 kts)
Range	1,400 km (870 mi, 760 nmi)
Service ceiling	6,000 m (19,700 ft)
Rate of climb	5.00 m/s (984 ft/min)

THE RIGHT STUFF



The Rivet Removal Tool

Drilling out rivets can often cause damage to your aircraft structure, especially when drilling them out of soft material such as fibre glass. The drill will tend to run leaving you with an oversized or elongated hole. To do this accurately and minimizing damage it's best to use the proper rivet removal tool, available from Aircraft Spruce, Aircraft Tool Supply and others.

The tool is used when drilling out dome rivets, either pulled rivets or driven rivets. A guide fits over the rivet head and will ensure your drill bit remains centered over the rivet. Good practice when drilling out pulled rivets is also to knock out the center pin with a punch before drilling.

The rivet removal tool easily and accurately removes rivets by drilling out only the head. Rivets are cleanly removed without damage to the rivet hole or aircraft skin. Fits any 1/4" air or electric drill. The rivet removal tool comes complete with four threaded drill bits and guides for removing 3/32" (#40), 1/8" (#30), 5/32" (#21) and 3/16" (#12) universal head (AN470) solid rivets.

It's always good to have the "Right Stuff"!

Watch video below for demo how to remove rivets



VANS RV 8 Make-over

& 30 year bucket list achievement, food for the soul!!

By Mike Puzey



We recently shared a rebuild restoration story on the Cessna 150 rebuild ZS-PVY you may recall the story in Contact! January 2022.

So here is the next make-over or redo project but this one is twisted with history and passion infused into a good story.....

The dream of an RV 8 This make over story was just part of a bigger life journey one takes for that personal inner piece we all look for in life !!

This was not a classic rebuild or sentimental classic aircraft restoration. This was a "reassembly and renovation of an RV"

After all, who doesn't dream of owning an RV after - the ultimate private sports plane one could wish to own. Well it's was for me, it's all I wanted after my KR1 of the 80's n 90's



This is an insanely good aeroplane make over along with a journey to complete a bucket list wish made thirty years earlier as a young dreamer.

Years later the dream realised and in the end I can confirm it has ended up 500 times more rewarding than I could have ever expected.

It's become a fantastic outcome of personal achievement along with top piece off machinery, all blended into so many levels of passion and pleasure !

So let's go back 34 years.... had no bucks and was just qualified as an aircraft engineer. All I could think about was how do I get into the air and get to fulfil these dreams I had as a kid.

From building toy models as a kid out of balsa wood, I was kind of a plane nut. My school friend Mark Hensman (some know him well) and I both built hand control line models back then (the only two odd ball kids in school by the way!!).

I had been inspired by his building standard, Mark was a demon with his hands, he made some of the best model planes I saw when we were kids, his work was just so exceptional and I spent lots of time admiring it.

It's seemed the only way to afford to get airborne was to build something. Buying a plane was just way out the price range back then.

So, after some scratching around the airfields and asking all kinds of people to see what I could find, that lead me to a 30% KR 1 project that could be finished and a cute 1966 Cessna 150 that was crashed but could be rebuilt, both a long way from being flyable but with glue, duct tape and a bottle of Scotch u will be surprised what u can get - haha.



En-route to the EAA Convention, Margate

As time passes, I did the rebuilt the Cessna 150. Working on a certified plane had its own challenges I must admit but she did come out well in the end even after the challenge of getting an AMO to sign everything.

I also flew her to Margate two times. She was slow but was just the best fun flying that I recall.

Side Note, I can say flying a marginal machine all over the place and into other countries does teach you many good aviation tips and skills. Winds made her stand still but it did make for great NAV and planning with limited fuel range.

Weight was something big in a C150 that you take for granted on more powerful machines.

This baby give one lots of respect for density altitude. Also become wise to what u can and can't carry in a small machine.



EAA Convention Margate



EAA Convention Margate

I can say I'm way safer and better off now for having flown a weed-walker for hundreds of hours as it added many skills to the long list of life lessons !!



Mike's KR 1 in formation with a Pitts

The KR was just cute and looked like a great machine that could be flown in a short time so took that home and started the build her into a hot ship.

Scratching for parts all over and after some tech homework on KR's, I realised the big thing appeared to be they all have CG problems commonly with builders. The rest of the plane is very simple so I assumed if CG is right, she should fly right !! That's the rule right.

So made simple wing mount jigs at the CG point, so that as the build happened, I could always check the CG was in or out easily at all times. If it was right all the way along during the build, then I wouldn't get to the end and have to weigh the machine to see what I had to move when the bulk of the work was done.

This constant CofG checking system allowed the build to be done so easy. I could constantly test

balance of the machine as I put needed parts on or into her. Made it so easy, cutting many hours out over then build time.

Then Fitted an 1850cc VW variant engine with only one mag to save weight (not smart) and a very simple exhaust. The inlet was also simple, and I fitted it with a 0-200 carb from a Cessna.

I modified the choke to get the air velocity right and it worked perfectly and had mixture control as well. Then Fitted hydraulic retract gear also to make her slick. PS - it was 25kts faster with the gear away - insane difference.

She test flew hand off, she was a so well-balanced machine and super easy to fly. In fact, funny story my first "ground test taxi" she got airborne before I realised it, so I thought well mmmm I have no tail time and we in the air so what the heck let's just go round that way I get to fly her at least once before I bend her trying to land again. Was extremely joyous moment flying it totally untested but very scary at the same time !!

By the way I had heard for years from the flying aces of the day that one needed years to flying spitfires and also to have flown in the war to be allowed to get into a tail dragged without killing your self, so that's all that was going thru my mind at this moment aaahhh !!

I had never even taxied a taildragger, never mind flown one..... Shew - was a scary moment right there.

So was a HUGE circuit, let's say and I came in called final thinking OMG here goes, this could end real bad. Came down feeling her by the seat of my pants, held her till she wanted to land and guess what....It was the most uneventful thing ever, I was relieved and dispirited at the same time. I was fine, plane was fine, so I asked for few more circuits and never did any more taxi tests.

I flew her few hundreds of hours taking her to Margate air show few times from Harare. Was the best fun ever !!

She now hangs in our business, for all to see, just as she was when I last flew her in 1994.



I then stopped flying in 1994, grounded the KR1 took the wings off and brought her home. Sold the 150 to a friend at Krugersdorp.

Back then money was tight. I had a new family happening and kids were soon to follow. Also work commitments no longer in aviation were many, so there was some life pressure.

So, the dream of flight became a blurry memory after that and as sad as that was, I needed to make choices. So, the planes came second unfortunately back then it's was just the way life goes.

Then let's jump 28 years of no flying for me and just looking at planes fly over. You guessed it I was itching for a plane now.

I had been talking to people and it became apparent that since I last flew years ago, there was this amazing company called VANS building metal 'n rivet machines that could perform way better than the brand machine of the year's past which seemed hard to believe.

Side note at this point -

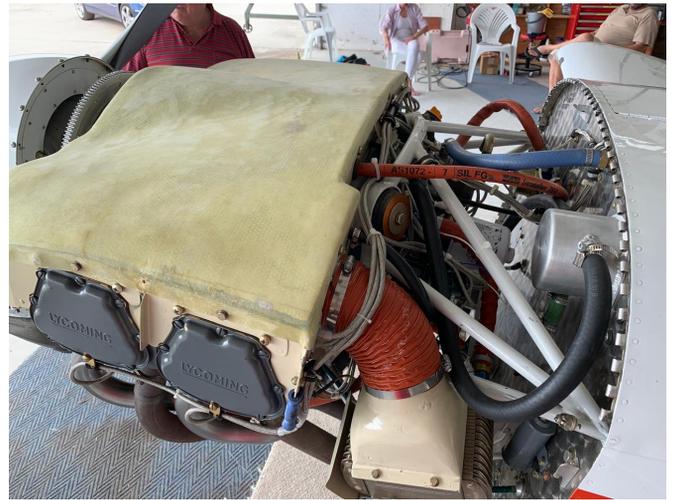
A fast factory metal machine was 160kts in the 1980's, 130kts was like an average back then. So, when I heard these RV's claiming 160-180kts with under 200hp engines, I couldn't believe what I was hearing, so did some homework.

After some reading, I was totally blown away that that a sheet metal rivet machine could do the things they were claiming, it seemed insane. So had to see one and try get into one, made some calls and managed to get into an RV8 just after that with Jason Beamish. He took me up and, OMG, was blown away with this machine !!

They really are next level and I just had to have one after that!

Talking to people here 'n there and after some time I found a machine down at Jeffries bay. It needed an engine to fly again. The owner and builder Hans Berger (ex SAA) was a very proud man and loved this machine like his baby. It took some time to get Hans to part with it, he had built and loved it for so long, but I did agree that at any time he could use it again if he wanted to.

I ordered and shipped the new 200HP engine from Lycoming and sent it to Chalkie's hanger where the plane was. Chalkie was an amazing man and fitted the engine like a factory job. He did great work and it was a pleasure dealing with him also what an amazing aviator he is.



Engine installation by Chalkie Stobbart



Test fly day arrived and Hans proudly jumped into his beautifully built machine and off he went. At sea level she was like a home sick angel. In the air in seconds and climbed for the sky like she was going to space. Was so good to watch.

Hans and I then flew the plane back to Johannesburg and she went like a songbird all the way back on about 37 liters per hour. So, after 28 years no flying, it was incredible to be back in the sky - in a machine that had performance I didn't even understand yet.



Hans at the controls of the machine he had built

I started renewing my PPL so had to redo all the exams again - OMG that almost killed me, it was a daunting challenge. I'm not what you would call academic so after rewriting some exams a few times I got all 8 done finally.

Did the flight test with Kevin Brown he was great. Finally, a PPL again and freedom to fly any time, felt like the first time I went solo, was such an amazing feeling.

Now the BIG challenge was to convert onto the RV8. So I found a RV7 to fly to get my hand in then I would be able to fly the 8 easily once I was happy on the 7. Did a few hours and it all came screaming back to me, was good to feel confident again and so quickly.

Nigel Hopkins flew with me and handed me off, I jumped into the 8 for the first-time up front as PIC and off we went. Was exciting but my nerves were shot to be honest ! I so did NOT what to bend this awesome but expensive machine on my first flight, specially after coming this far and even more than that after all the years off and then the coming back to make the dream come true.

Flight was great. Landing smooth much to my surprise. From then I could fly any time anywhere - it was such a wonderful feeling !!

Just flying her was a huge leap up from the KR1 of years ago, wow. Was just getting into to it and I got a call from Mark Hensman asking if I would be keen to send the plane to China for a few air shows. The deal sounded great, and we get to travel also, so I said yea - sounds great. We started planning then packed the planes in a 40HQ, two at a time and sent them over.



RV in China

The China air shows were great, I must say was a top experience if I could say that.

Stripped the planes and reassembled them 4 times during the air shows, that was a job but now I can strip and build her in just a few hours. Its such a great machine to assemble that I can do it with my eyes closed now after all the builds over there.



Air shows done, the shipped planes arrived back from China just a few days before Covid started. The RV was still in pieces when we went into lock down and I was dying to have flown her but never got too, we were told all air spaces closed "Covid aliens, very dangerous" Right OMG



Mike stripped the planes and reassembled them 4 times during the air shows I China

So, I thought what better time to renovate her than now. Also consider there was no ways I was sitting at home during Covid with little or nothing to do when there is a plane in the hanger to play with....no no no.

What a great time it was, I had everything to my self during that time - it was so good??

The only one at the airfield. Roads were empty, could fly around. Was just the best work time just a bit spooky like the world ended and I was the last left behind - haha.

I could spend day and night at the hanger not a care in the world. Was so good to to work like that and the biggest thing was the silence everywhere. I just felt sorry for the people stuck at home when I was having the best time working in the safest place possible.

Stripped the plane right down. Prepared her for paint. Then chose the blue and white.

I stripped her in and out for paint. Was a mammoth task to get ready for face lift wow. So chose to make the interior the gloss grey. Was so good to see all new and after the cream colour.

Then outside new white along with adding of the best blue on to the outside along with some graphics and a pin stripes to finish it off. Then a great clear coat over it all.





Wow - did it look insanely hot or what when she was done. Just came alive with the new paint and shiny clear coat over all of it. Sexy, sexy looking thing !

The reassembly happened the next two to three weeks. She looked amazing as she came back together. An RV8 is such a sexy machine, could not stop looking at her, took me an hour to leave the hanger every day - hahahah

Last part of the story, it's was frustrating but it then took months to get a permit to fly her. One needed permits to test fly with many limitations incase u caught Covid I guess? Flying seemed so safe compared to the fears of a Covid death apparently !!

Test flight was great and it was so good to back in

the air again. She was wonderful to fly all refurbished. Since that time I have added about 100 great hours to her. I also changed the dash panel and fitted the Garmin GX3. OMG that is insanely good equipment wow. Expensive but so worth it.

ZU-SPD is like a work of art now. New engine. New prop. New paint in 'n out. New instruments. Smoke system.

Words can't describe the feel you have when you have waited 28 years to realise a dream and it comes true. Life changing.

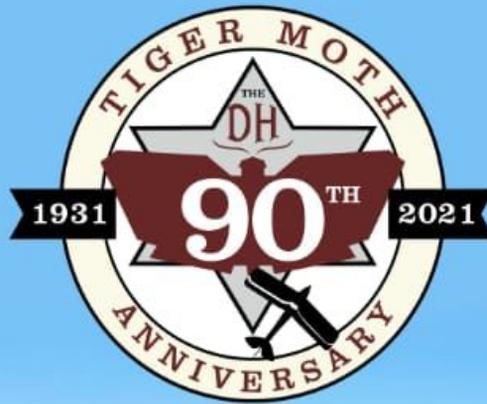
"To the sky's and beyond. No mission impossible".

Till next time!

Mike Puzey



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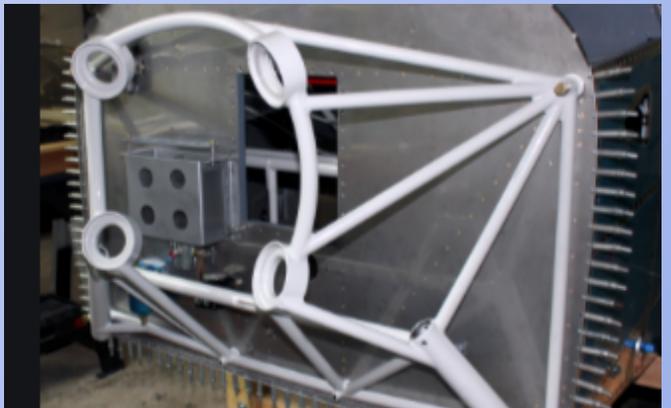
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