

December 2023

SQUAWK



UFO President. From the Port Side

by Kenneth (Brownie) Brown



At this time of the year, there are thoughts of sugar plums and visions of the unimaginable. An old man in a red suit flying in an open vehicle powered by 9 propulsion mammals. This count is assuming the rotating beacon is located in the front. A UFO at work doing good deeds for the world.

Well, folks, that's us. As members of the most exclusive aviation organization, we take pride each day in our ability to fly. This unique privilege is not taken for granted but is certainly appreciated. But a UFO is more than being an aviator. It is about being a guiding light to the aviation world. Like Rudolph, we need to light the way for the rest of the piloting world. We need to be the encouragers of those trying to get started or to continue to the PPL.

I know that our generation has been there, done that, and possesses the Tee shirt. But have you assisted someone with flying lately? Have you talked about what it means to be an older pilot, and what it takes to remain fit, not just physically but, as importantly, mentally?

Everyday life seems to be more like a repetition of days, followed by more of the same. The familiar reoccurrences (rut) appear to be normal. We need to stimulate our minds, bodies, and activities so each day is a mini-adventure. This will keep us young and ready to tackle the next challenge.

We have opportunities for you to serve within the organization. We seek board mem-

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bers who are willing to tackle so many of our toughest problems: Membership and Retention as well as Overseeing and Recruiting “local hosts” to have small monthly gatherings...a time to share the aviation talk with fellow aviators.

I also want to take this time to wish every one of you the very best in this holiday season. Regardless of your holiday, my wish for you is a year full of adventures in flying or talking about flying.

Happy Hanukkah



Happy Holidays



Merry Christmas



Let's plan big for the new year of 2024 and make a difference.

Tailwinds and clear skies,

Brownie

president@ufopilots.org





by Egon Frech



It seems safe to say that one of the major issues facing UFO members is the availability of insurance for their aircraft.

We've had reports from pilots having to pay increasingly higher rates, being subjected to requirements such as a safety pilot, and even being unable to get coverage at any reasonable price. One member who wants to buy an experimental airplane and get back into flying after a few years' hiatus was quoted a \$20,000 annual premium - clearly a message that he and his airplane are considered uninsurable.

Some people say there's age discrimination going on. They point out that the NTSB accident database doesn't show any significant increase in accidents as pilots get older. A few even think we should be taking the insurance companies to court.

But that's not the whole story. The insurance companies have their own data on the losses they have paid, which goes a little deeper into the statistical reality of aging pilots and their airplanes. A lot of the mishaps that end up as insurance claims never even get reported to the NTSB, but they still cost the insurance companies money. When they analyze that data, it appears to them that an aircraft owned and operated by an 80-year-old on average costs them more than one owned by a 50-year-old. The companies looking at new applicants don't know us as individuals, only as members of a statistical group. We may have a lot more wisdom and experience, but most of us also have slower reaction time; memory, hearing, and vision loss and a tendency to focus on a single factor rather than exercising general awareness of our surroundings. While driving, we can compensate somewhat by slowing down, but that doesn't work in an airplane.

So, is there any solution for us? The American Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) has entered into an arrangement with Assured Partners Aerospace in an attempt to guarantee insurance availability to age 70, but that's not much help for octogenarians. A new group called AviatorsDirect gave a presentation on a novel idea for aircraft insurance to one of our regional meetings in October and that may present some possibilities, but I have not heard of any progress on the issue. Perhaps they got insufficient response.

Given that bleak outlook for 80-year-old new applicants, is there anything those of us

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who are still insured can do to keep our policies and keep the premiums reasonable?

My own insurance policy came up for renewal this month, and I was quoted \$1,140 for \$1 million liability and \$65,000 of hull coverage. That represented a \$45 increase from last year. Not bad, considering inflation. The company noted, however, that the VREF value of my airplane is now \$103,000, and offered me coverage at that level for \$1,388. I'm 84 years old; somebody up there must be looking out for me. I took the increased coverage offer.

Aside from luck or divine intervention, however, there may be some things in my profile that fit the description of what one should do to keep one's insurance company relatively happy despite one's advancing years.

- 1...I own a Cessna Skyhawk. (That, or the Piper Cherokee, are the most insurable airplanes out there. (Parts are cheap and available. No chance of a wheels-up landing, single engine, stone simple even for an 84-year-old to fly.)
- 2...I fly about 130 hours a year, 80 or 90 of that in the Skyhawk, on which I have about 4,500 hours total. (Experienced in the airplane. Active pilot. Little rust.)
- 3...I'm still a mission pilot for the Civil Air Patrol and have to undergo a thorough annual check ride (with IFR) that, with a couple of courses from the AOPA Air Safety Institute, qualifies as a flight review. (Annual certification from an organization with high quality standards.)
- 4...I actively participate in the FAA WINGS program and achieved a new level during the past year. (Continuing education program.)
- 5...I have been with the same insurance company for the past 5 years. Because of my age, my broker no longer shops around for price. (Good risk history.)

My co-pilot, Roxanne, always says that one shouldn't discuss things that are going well (like a lack of traffic jams on the DC beltway) until the trip is over because that immediately causes the thing to be jinxed and go awry. Having said all of the above, I hope she's wrong this time.

That's over and out for now.

Egon Frech,

editor@ufopilots.org



By Dr. Harry Wander



Kava Kava and Kratom

Kava Kava and Kratom are available without a prescription in the U.S. and are becoming popular. However, they have potential risks when used by pilots.

Kava Kava comes from the *Piper methysticum* plant, which is native to islands of the Pacific Ocean. People native to the South Pacific islands use a Kava Kava drink during cultural and religious ceremonies to create a state of altered consciousness. People can also make powder or tablets from the dried roots. It reduces muscle impulses, serves as a muscle relaxant and reduces anxiety.

Kratom leaves contain mitragynine and 7-a-hydroxy mitragynine. These chemicals interact with opioid receptors and produce similar effects as a stimulant or an opioid. It has mind-altering effects. It produces pleasure, sedation and relieves pain. With a low dosage, the user feels an increase in energy, sociability, alertness, heightened libido, and loss of appetite.

The drugs impair concentration, decision-making and critical judgement. Studies in car drivers showed impairment in thinking in general. These effects have obvious implications for pilot safety.

Both drugs can interact with other medications the pilot may be taking. Both have the potential to become addicting.. Kava Kava can cause liver damage. Kratom in large doses can cause respiratory depression. Large doses of either drug can cause death. They have both been banned in Canada and the U.K.

The FAA prohibits the use of substances that could affect safety. It recommends pilots consult their AME before considering using either one of these drugs.



By Ralph Bennett

As the winter winds blow and our flights become fewer perhaps this might be a good time to pull out our pilot log books to recall the memories of our aviation past, a very privileged past we all share.

If those memories take us back to the 1950s and 60s, we might recall that it was a different time for aviation. Flight schools always bought new planes, selling the older ones to individuals. A CFI was \$ 4.00 per hour, a Cherokee was about \$14.00 an hour and a Cessna 150 was \$ 12.00. There were usually several of them on the flight line and they usually stayed busy. Over in the maintenance shop, labor rates were \$ 8.00 an hour for an A&P. The Narco Mark 12 was the latest in radio technology and Transponders? What are those? Maybe someone had one, but not me.

There were a lot of high school and college kids such as myself, who sacrificed a great deal to learn to fly. But we did it and in my case, I had the privilege of putting myself

through college via my CFI. We learned to fly not because of any inherent need, but because there was a burning passion. There are kids today with dreams of flight who will find a way to do it, just like we did. The reason most people learned to fly is not to get from



point A to point B but rather for the romance, joy, freedom and thrill it brings us. People fly because they love to fly, and whatever changes there may be in technology and cost, that is one fact that will never change.

So whether we fly a lot or a little or no longer, our shared aviation adventures bind us together as does our unique membership in the United Flying Octogenarians.

So, Happy Holidays to all of us and in the words of Tiny Tim, "God Bless Us Everyone"



Dear Editor,

Sure n'joyed your cold-wx 172 story! Made me appreciate the Arizona winter even more since my early flyin' days were in Wyoming 🤔

Cap'n Billy

Sent from the apex of a Stearman loop 🤔

Editor,

I used Mach 2 for insurance and got a 25-30 % discount from previous insurance and I had a \$45,000 deductible on movement, (Malibus have a lot of landing accidents) and now I only pay \$3,000.

I think they are looking at older pilots, I'm 76 flying a couples Malibu.

D. Ryan

Dear Egon,

I would like to say that Harry Wander's idea for a classified ad section is a great one. I have crossed the big 90 mark, and have a 1976 Cessna that is not enjoying the flying it should since I lost a portion of my right leg due to an infection two years ago. I can drive a car, but I no longer have an ankle, and the right pedal on a Skyhawk has a toe brake that I cannot manage without an ankle.

Jim Kirk

Editor,

As a newbie member of UFO, I would like to say that I'm very impressed by the activity shown by the members and our administrative leaders. Look for me in 2024 to come to some of the fly-ins.

Lars Martin, C182 N91523

Editor Egon,

In response to the thought in a recent UFO newsletter about providing you with some fodder when the report of our passing presents itself, I offer the attached. I do not expect that the information will be needed soon as all major parts are functioning well.

Thank you for your great work on the UFO newsletter. It is very enjoyable to read.

Nick Modders



This picture was taken 25 November at the Leesburg, FL airport, we're calling it, "Three Generations of Pilots". Left to right, Joe Blandford, 87, UFO member; grandson Hunter Mayfield, 33; son Bob Blandford, 59. All are certified AS-MEL, Instruments. In background is our Seneca IV.

Joe Blandford



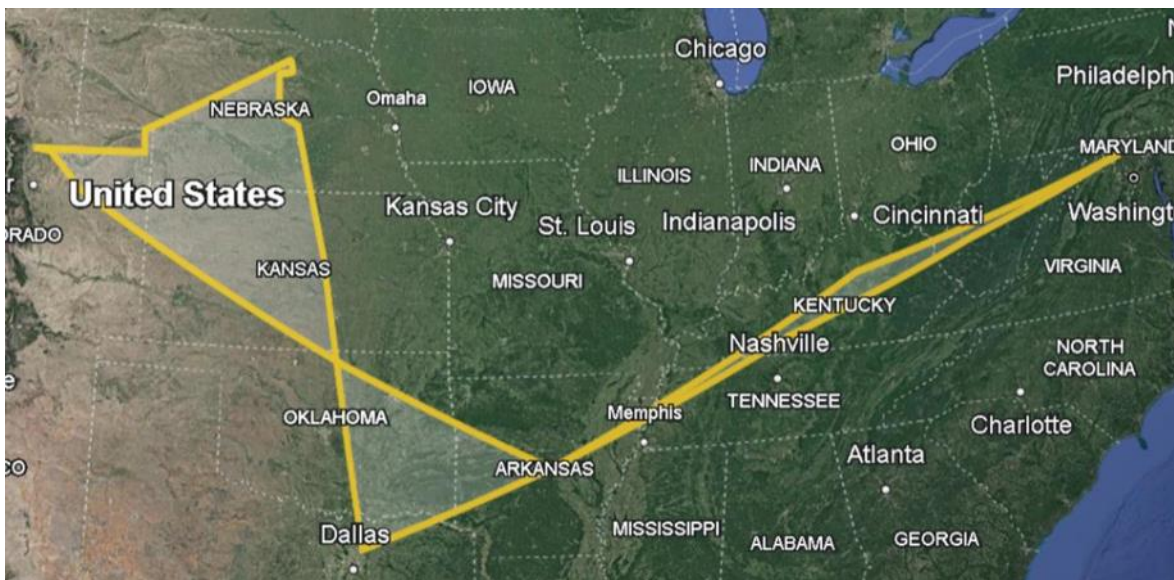


Tour de Creains: Mom Goes Home 8-15 October 2023

By Jim Feighny N358JR

My mother passed away in April of 2023. Just a couple weeks short of her 105th birthday, and in keeping with her wishes, her cremains were to be moved from Texas to Loveland CO for Inurnment next to her husband. The assisted living facility where she had been residing for the preceding 3 years also was a "full-service" operation and would ship your remains to the designated receiver. I told my brother that I would prefer to make that trip myself. And so, the concept of the Tour was created.

Janet and I flew the RV-9 down to McKinney Texas and retrieved Mom and after a dinner with family, off we went. North to O'Neill NE and a pass by the homestead ranch where she was born, then on the Julesburg CO, where she and my dad built a successful well drilling and service business. The flight continued to Holyoke CO for a pass over the family farm, a tip of the hat to my dad's venture into being a gentleman farmer and a final stop at Loveland/Ft Collins and a meeting to finalize her arrival. We spent a couple more days visiting former neighbors and family and then returned to Frederick MD. All told 28 hours on the tach, 7 days on the road, 3500 NM and 190 gallons of fuel. Mom would have shaken her head that it was possible to do such a trip in just a week!



After we landed at KFD and had taxied to the hangar, I told Janet, you get out first, then I'll get out and open the hangar. She looked at me and said, you mean there's no nice man with a golf cart to take our bags and put the plane in the hangar?



WARNING, WARNING, WARNING.

By John Chirtea

You all know the old story. When you land with your wheels up, "it is not if you are going to do it, but when".



John with "Buttercup", his 1965 Alon A2 Aircoupe

The same holds true for TFR incursions, and I did it. You may have heard about someone "busting" the Rehoboth presidential TFR on the morning of November 4.

Well, yes, that was me! So I send this **WARNING** out to all as a reminder that we need to pay special attention to the **quick** pop up of these TFRs. While I knew there was one for Dover over the weekend, I totally missed the one for Rehoboth.

My mistake resulted in being intercepted by a Coast Guard helicopter, being directed to land back at my home airport, being interviewed by the Coast Guard pilot, two Homeland Security officials and one Delaware State policeman, and experiencing large exposure in the local newspaper.





Rod Barber

Email Address: clarke.barber@comcast.net

Currently instructing in the UH72 at Ft Novese/Rucker), Alabama. Been here since 2011. Prior to that 23 years at Weyerhaeuser Aviation in Seattle. That was preceded by 20 years military aviation. Soloed in 1966 at Roger Clarke aviation in Van Nuys, CA.



Howard Sets Guinness World Record With Flight Instructor Certification

After more than a half century of aviation, Art Howard of Lake City became a certified flight instructor on March 14 in Cloquet, Minn. He was 82 years and 54 days old at the time.

He said it was a way to give back after decades pursuing a hobby that first caught his interest as a child.

He's since received another certificate, this one from the Guinness World Records as the "oldest person to qualify as a flight instructor."

Howard said he noticed last summer that the previous record holder was younger than him.

"I said well maybe I can make a world record," he said.

Howard began his flight instructor training at Venture North Aviation, LLC last winter. He obtained his FAA Certified Instructor Instrument (CFII) in March after completing their practical course, demonstrating both oral and in-flight proficiency to a Designated Pilot Examiner.



He said the process for getting a record certified by Guinness World Records was “rather complex.” “You had to submit a whole bunch of information,” including his birth certificate and verification from the flight school, copies of his flight log-book, and other information, he said.



It’s the second major aviation-related honor he’s received in recent years.

In April of 2018 he received a Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award from the Federal Aviation Administration honoring him for “practicing and promoting safe aircraft operations for 50 years.”

His more than 50 years of aviation have taken him as far south as the Bahamas and as far north as the north coast of Alaska to a place called Prudhoe Bay.

He flies a 1962 Piper Cherokee that he bought in 1975.

He’s now an independent flight instructor working part-time out of the Red Wing Regional airport.

He volunteers his time to fly youth ages 8 to 17 for free as part of The Young Eagles program from the Experimental Aviation Association (EAA).

“It’s a way to introduce young people to aviation, which is kind of nice,” he said.

He recently surpassed 100 of these Young Eagle flights. Anyone interested in participation in the program can contact Howard at 507-251-2524.

He’s also volunteered with LifeLine Pilots, which matches volunteer pilots with passengers who need to travel for medical care or humanitarian purposes.

Last week he flew a boy and his mother from Champagne, Ill., to Rochester for the boy to receive medical care.



Robert McAfee

Grew up In east Tenn.

bigmac20@earthlink.net

Army 1945 -1946

Graduated medical school Memphis 1952

Soloed In J3 Cub. Got limited license in my brother's Aircoupe 1954.

Married with 4 children now have 7 great grand children

Practiced Medicine in Lakin Kansas 1955-1964.

Flew multiple different planes while in Kansas.

Psychiatric residency at University of Kansas, Kansas City 1967

Practiced psychiatry In KC until in 1981 moved to Springfield MO

Didn't fly for 36 years.

Rusty pilot 2016 flying on drivers license

Have light sport Flight Design, N371CT





Bill Shepherd

By Mary (Skip Brown)

My exposure to the aviation world began at a very early age. During WW2, my dad trained pilots on the Link trainer (an early simulator) in the Army Air Corps. After the war, my family moved from Mississippi, where I was born, to New Orleans where my dad worked for an airline, continuing to train pilots on the Link trainer. When my dad worked the night shift, I went with him, and at age 7, would fly the link trainer. When

I was 13, I became a member of the Civil Air Patrol, and in 1953, at age 16, I was helping with the maintenance of the planes in the Rebel Flying Club, saving my money so I could take flying lessons. My first lessons, including some aerobatics, were in a J-3 Cub. After making my first four landings, my instructor told me I was ready to solo and he got out of the plane. After my 5th landing, I was told to get my log book so the instructor could record my landings, which now included my solo flight.



Rather than be drafted after graduating from high school, I joined the Marine Corps so I could be part of the aviation program. I got my AP license and was a mechanic in the Helicopter Squadron, traveling to the Mediterranean on 3 different aircraft carriers as the crew chief. After three years in the Marines, I attended LSU for a year until I realized I couldn't afford to finish. I was in the Marine Reserves for 17 years. I went to work for Chevron, flying seaplanes in the swamps of New Orleans, as the copilot on an amphibious Grumman Goose and Mallard, flying back and forth in the ditches.

I left Chevron in 1966 and went to work for Delta Airlines for 31 years, seven of those years flying in the Asia Pacific. I flew the DC-6, DC-7, and Convair transport planes before the airlines started flying jets. I retired when I was 60 and my wife, Dot, and I bought land in Diamond Point (Sequim WA) in 1988 and moved there full-time in 1993.

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The first airplane I owned was a Swift, which I still fly. In 1970 I became a charter member (#24) of the IAC (International Aerobatic Club) which became a division of EAA. I was president of the New Orleans EAA Chapter 261 in 1963 and subsequently served in many different positions in that organization.

I was a member of the Historic Flight Foundation, an aviation museum, at Paine Field in Mukilteo, WA, where for five years I did formation flying in a Mustang P-51 and a T-6 until they moved the museum to Felts Field in Spokane, WA.

I've been a volunteer for several years at the Reno Air Races, helping with the maintenance of a Yak and other planes. In 2015, after selling my Yak-11 to Dusty Dowd, I became his alternate pilot for the Air Races. I flew the Yak-11 for ten years, including 84 aerobatic air shows.

I currently own a Yak-3, a Russian top fighter with a US-developed Allison V-12 engine. Built in Russia, it was shipped via New Zealand, Australia, and South Africa, to Diamond Point WA. I was in the process of putting it all back together when I was offered a hangar at Fairchild Airport in Port Angeles, WA, where I finished building it and took my first flight from there. I also own an Aero 45, a twin-engine, 5-seat, low-wing tail dragger, built in the Czech Republic



With 32,000 hours of flight time, I have flown 126 different types of planes, test flown planes, and rebuilt antique and classic planes. I've been to all but two Oshkosh EAA AirVentures, Sun N Fun Fly-ins, and the Tennessee and Fort Worth Swift Fly-ins. I was the first instructor at the Aero Mu-

seum in Port Townsend, WA.

My wife and I have two daughters who both soloed at age 16. My youngest daughter took her lessons and soloed in my Swift. Our son was the victim of a fatal private airplane crash at age 31. We have two grandsons, a great-granddaughter, and a great-grandson.

My words of wisdom: "If you don't have a passion for flying, try something else."



Yak 11



Yak 3



Globe Swift



We have a special treat for you this Christmas issue. Arty Trost, (thewanderingwench@yahoo.com), who has just qualified for full membership in UFO after having been an Auxiliary Wing member, flew her S-LSA around the perimeter of the United States last summer. Breaking with normal editorial policy about overly long stories, we're publishing her account of the episode.

Editor

AEROPRAKT ADVENTURE AROUND AMERICA...AT ALMOST 80

By Arty Trost, Sandy River Airport, Oregon (03S)

I'm looking out over a sea of white. Mountain tops peek out of the clouds. I am 2000' above the cloud deck, flying from hole to hole, trying to keep the ground in sight. My GPS shows me the road as it snakes around the southern tip of Glacier National Park. "Only 20 miles of these clouds," I keep saying to myself. "At 90 knots, that's about 12-15 minutes. Only 12-15 minutes of this. Only 12-15 minutes."





It is Friday, Aug. 4, 2023, and I am in the 7th week of my flight around the perimeter of the continental U.S. My flying partner, Dennis Long, left earlier this morning to take a direct GPS route over Glacier. I wanted the "security" of a road beneath me, so we agreed to fly separately and meet up at Boundary County Airport, Bonners Ferry, ID (65S). I can't believe I'm going to fly over the northern Rockies by myself!!!

How Did This Happen?

I've been flying-obsessed for over 30 years, starting with a Sunburst ultralight, then a Maxair Drifter E-LSA, then a Talon E-LSA, and since 2021 an Aeroprakt A22 - an S-LSA. I love flying extreme long distances, and for 25 years made a 3-4 week flying/camping trip throughout the western and central U.S. in ultralight-type aircraft with two-stroke engines. In 2009 I flew my Drifter to Sun 'n Fun from my home base in northwest Oregon: Sandy River Airport (03S). After that incredible flight (most of it flown @ 50-60 mph, sometimes dropping to 30 mph when headwinds really blew,) the idea sparked of flying the U.S. perimeter. I fought the idea for over ten years, contenting myself with my annual 3-4 week flights.



Sue Monk Kidd wrote "*Never underestimate the power of a dismissed dream. There must be a place inside us where dreams go and wait their turn.*" My "dismissed dream" kept popping up, and I thought - "If not now, when?" Some people said my "when" had already passed; at almost 80, I should only be flying within in my local area. I decided to ignore them. In 2021, I bought an Aeroprakt A-22, a plane that would allow me to fly the perimeter in comfort. My first fully enclosed aircraft!

Dennis Long, a friend from Arkansas, heard I was going to make the flight and said he wanted to fly his Aeroprakt A-32 to Oregon and fly the perimeter with me. I couldn't ask for a more knowledgeable flying partner: Dennis, recently retired as the North American distributor for Aeroprakt, has ferried them all over the U.S., and knows the Aeroprakt better than anyone else in the U.S.



Dennis Long and his Aeroprakt A-32

What Was Most Important? Trust – and Flexibility

We both had complete trust in each other's piloting ability. We both have experience in extreme cross-country flying in ultralights and light sport aircraft. We knew we could handle our planes over unfamiliar territory, at unfamiliar airstrips, and in less-than-perfect weather conditions. Willingness to acknowledge and accommodate our different flying styles and different levels of risk tolerance was essential. It gave us the freedom to fly separately – sometimes for days at a time – as well as together.

Both of us are completely comfortable changing plans, both on the ground and in the air; that flexibility was critical to our way of flying together. Frequently we made route changes as we flew, depending on weather, terrain, and interesting sights we wanted to explore.

Different Planning Methods

I fly like an ultralight pilot. Thirty years of flying with two-stroke engines means I don't trust the engine will always hum happily, and I follow roads so if the engine quits, I'm not too far from help. That has hardly ever happened, but it was drummed into me: don't fly a direct GPS route over unlandable terrain. I plan compulsively, figuring out a route using road maps, sectionals, Chart Supplements, a Scalex MapWheel, topo maps, and advice from experienced pilots.

Dennis figures out what he wants to do ("fly around the perimeter of the contiguous U.S.") and puts in likely stopping points based on SkyVector, then pretty much follows the magenta line on his Dynon.

We didn't use my flight plans, which were based on following roads as much as possible. Our actual flight planning was done every morning: we'd look at the weather and the relevant sectional and target our final stop for the day, as well as one or two stops *en route*, to stretch our legs, empty our bladders, and get something to eat. We agreed we'd do two, or at the most three, legs a day, and we'd try to limit those legs to about three hours. That gave us a range of approximately 250-300 miles between stops.



Since both have 30 gallons aboard, and a fuel burn of 2.5-4 gph, giving us plenty of reserve fuel. As we flew, we sometimes changed our plans in the air based on weather and interesting sights to see.

Different Approaches to Flying

Dennis and I knew we had very different levels of risk tolerance. We agreed we'd each fly to our own personal maximums...even if it meant flying different routes at times. The agreement became a reality on our first day. Our route was counter-clockwise around the perimeter of the contiguous U.S., and our first day would take us south along the Oregon coast. When I checked some weather apps, they all showed MVFR



Dennis Long Photo

along the coast - low clouds and some mountain obscuration. And lots of high wind gusts around Cape Blanco. I decided to fly an inland route. Dennis wanted to fly "the perimeter" and flying inland didn't count. We amiably agreed to fly our

separate ways and meet up in the evening. I almost regretted my decision when I saw some of his photos: the clouds had lifted enough that he didn't have to scud run. But he said strong rotors around Cape Blanco made for "a wild and hairy ride so it's good you didn't come."

The Weather

Five miles ahead of me is a gauzy blanket of grey. As I fly towards it, it moves away, always keeping its five-mile distance. Nothing is visible through the blanket, so I'm relying on flying the magenta line on my GPS. Not a road in sight, just rocky desert. I'm at 9000' to get over the Arizona mountains, and it's hot, hot, hot, even at this altitude. Then my tablet announces: "This device is shutting down due to overheating." And it goes black!

I radio Dennis: "I'm flying blind! I need to follow your plane via ADSB." The blackout continues until we land at our next stop and bring the tablet into the air-conditioned FBO.



Dennis Long Photo

Heat and smoky haze, heat and smoky haze. All across southern California, Arizona, New Mexico, and west Texas, we were flying in the heat dome. Temps up to 105°. The smoky haze was a wall that kept moving away from us, but always obscured any

terrain waypoints. Looking directly below I had visual contact with the ground, but it was often obscured. For me, this was one of the most stressful and exhausting parts of the trip.

Overall, though, we actually had amazingly good flying weather on our flight...especially once we were past Texas. Tailwinds frequently, so I saw speeds over the ground of 90-100 kts. when my ASI was reading 75-80 kts. We only put down a few times to wait out storms, and then it was only for a morning or afternoon.

Now I Lay Me Down To Sleep

I'm fast asleep about 6:30 a.m. when I wake to angry shouting. "WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING HERE? WHAT MAKES YOU THINK YOU CAN SLEEP IN THIS FBO? WHO'S IN THE TENT OUTSIDE? GET OUT OF HERE!!! I'M CALLING THE POLICE!!!" I open my eyes to see an infuriated man standing there, shouting at me, and taking a video with his smartphone. I stutter and stammer and make apologies and then I say what turns out to be the magic words: "We'll pack our planes and get out of here."

He stops shouting and says incredulously, "Planes? You and your friend have a plane here?"

"Yes, the orange and the green ones. You can see them from here."

Immediately he becomes really apologetic, explaining they were having a lot of trouble with homeless people, and telling me I should go back to sleep and he'll help us refuel when we were ready.

We had landed on a Friday evening after two long legs at a large, completely deserted airport. Dennis had set up his tent outside the FBO and I pumped up my air mattress and made myself comfortable inside the tiny FBO.



I've slept in a lot of FBOs over the years, and this perimeter flight was no exception. Some were tiny and some were large and amazingly luxurious. Merrill Municipal Airport (KRRL) had a small "bedroom" with recliners that stretched out flat for sleeping and a sign you could hang on the doorknob saying "Shhh. Pilot sleeping."

We had planned to camp or sleep in FBOs for most of the flight, thinking of staying in a motel every 4 or 5 nights. But we encountered the "heat dome" all across the southern border and it was just too hot to camp. (Temps over 100°.) So we stayed in motels more than we expected. We also overnighted with friends – both old friends and new friends we made along the way. When people heard about our perimeter flight, we received lots of invitations to spend the night – and we took them up on their offers if they weren't too far off our planned route.

What Should I Take With Me?

Tony Bolstad flew his Searay from Tampa to San Padre Island, and sent us extremely detailed – and very useful – information about his flight planning. Tony sent me a list of the 76 categories of items he packed. He also included a list of the 35 items he actually used. It was really helpful to realize I didn't have to pack everything except the kitchen sink. Although our flight was going to be significantly longer than Tony's, I realized I didn't need to take all the tools for a full-field repair. I could buy stuff along the way.

I took:

Clothes & toiletries

Camping gear

Food & water (we usually skipped breakfast and munched on snacks for our first leg, then had lunch and dinner at restaurants; bottled water,)

Flight planning materials (19 sectionals plus road maps and chart supplements)

Airplane stuff (chocks, Decalin, gas can, gas siphon hose, extra oil filters, cleaning rags, windshield cleaner, duct tape, electrical tape, zip ties, ties downs, oil, rope)

Electronics (2 tablets with GPS & weather apps, laptop, camera, chargers)

Miscellaneous (books, notepad, pen/pencil, whistle, sunglasses)



As far as tools, Dennis took only a few tools with him, reasoning we'd be able to find tools at airports if needed. I followed his lead:

Multi-tool like a Leatherman, it has a knife, screwdriver, pliers and other things.

6" Crescent Wrench with a wider opening.

Stubby screwdriver with multiple changeable bits.

A T25 Torx wrench for the brake disk screws.

Battery jump pack, a smaller one.

CO2 tire inflator from a bike shop or a mountain bike tire air pump.

3/8 and 1/2" sockets with ratchet and 6" extension used to remove a wheel.

The Route and the Terrain



When I look at the map, I find it hard to believe I really flew over 10,000 miles. (I hand-flew the entire route. There were times I envied Dennis and his auto-pilot.)

We flew counter-clockwise, leaving Oregon on June 14 and heading south. We by-passed the congestion of Los Angeles and San Diego, turning east when we were north of L.A. We followed the southern border pretty closely, making a detour

to San Antonio where my granddaughter is stationed. (She's in the Navy.) We also didn't fly around the tip of Florida - I wasn't willing to fly over the Everglades. As you can see from the map, I didn't fly to the northern tip of Maine; too many pilots told me it's nothing but roadless forested mountains - and I don't like to tempt fate. (Or my Rotax 912uls.)

Dennis and I flew different routes for 15 of my 38 days of flying. Our last joint stop was Sequim Valley Airport, WA (W28) where we spent the night with Brownie (yes, our UFO president!) and Skip Brown, his life co-pilot. The next morning (Aug. 6,) was MVFR but Dennis was anxious to get home. He left in the morning, heading for Arkansas, and I waited until afternoon when the weather had cleared.



Rebecca Graham, another Aeroprakt pilot, (yes, her Aeroprakt is orange too!) flew to Sequim to meet me, and together we flew south. Rebecca turned around after a few hours and I continued on toward my home airport in Sandy, OR (03S).

Yet I wasn't willing for the flight to end. So I flew farther south and spent the night with some friends. Then, finally, I was ready to acknowledge my amazing adventure was really over!!

Between us, Dennis and I took over a thousand photos. Here are a few:



Over Arizona

I was worried about landing in Bisbee, AZ because it's right on the Mexican border. Even with my GPS, how would I know if I was inadvertently flying into Mexican airspace? As we got closer, I saw I didn't have to worry. The "wall" was clearly visible.



Sierra Vista Municipal Airport-Libby Army Airfield (KFHU) is a joint-use civil-military airport. Military aircraft always have priority.

I waited at the hold short line for almost ten minutes (in blistering heat) watching military planes, drones, and helicopters take off and land. The drone in this photo was larger than my Aeroprakt!



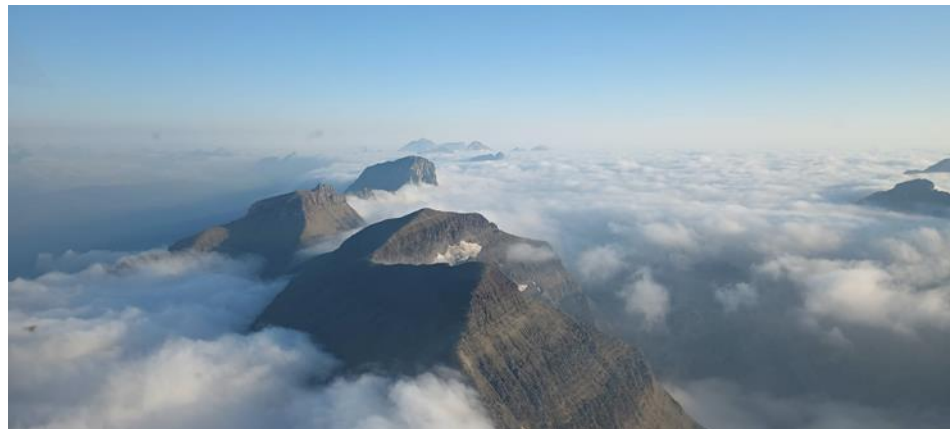
Landing at First Flight Airport (KFFA) was an incredible thrill. We walked to the memorial and gaped at the amazing displays in the museum.

All photos on this page are by Dennis Long





Photos by Dennis Long



*Two weeks at
AirVenture*



Two weeks at Air Ven-
ture

The Statistics

Total time: Seven weeks (two at AirVenture)

Flight days: 38

Flight hours: 135

Landings: 122

Gallons of gas: 462

Number of sectionals: 19

Cost: I don't want to know!

Summary:

Amazing. Exhausting. Exhilarating. Stressful. Frightening. Joyous. Challenging.

All these adjectives apply, and many more as well. Did I enjoy the flight? Mostly, yes. Sometimes, no. Would I do it again? ABSOLUTELY!!!

Arty Trost

Gone West

Frank Ahearn, Florida