

The WingNut

EAA Chapter One Flabob Airport (RIR) Riverside, CA



Volume 58, Issue 3

We make flying FUN!

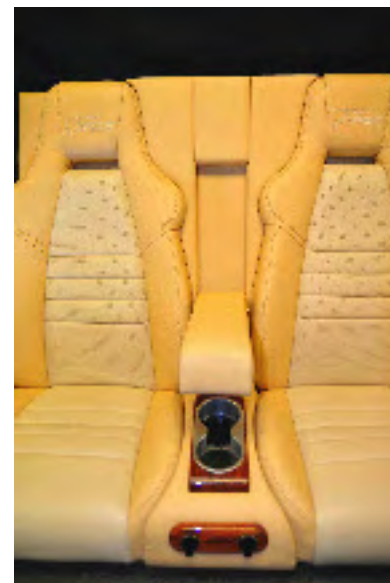
March 2011

'Most customized Comanche' to be featured at meeting March 12th



Las Vegas real estate developer David Lessnick loved flying the 1964 Piper Comanche 250 he flew frequently for business. But, like most of us at one time or another, he got new plane fever. He did well financially in the real estate boom during the '90s and early 2000s, so he set his sights on the new VLJs (Very Light Jet) that were all the rage. He even plunked \$25K down on one model (which he got refunded before the company folded).

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Aeroncas to gather at Flabob May 20-22

Like a number of other type clubs, the Aeronca Aviators Club will stage their annual Southwest Fly-In at Flabob Airport on May 20 - 22. The group is expecting to attract Aeronca and other antique owners from Southern California, Nevada and Arizona.

"We're not sure how many will come in, but there are a lot of Aeroncas in this part of the world," said organizer Jim Spee. "We hope that there will be enough interest to make this an annual event. It's going to be low key, but most owners prefer it that way." Initial arrivals are expected to begin on Friday with an informal dinner planned for Friday evening.



Aeronca Champs, like the one flown here by Patty Wagstaff, will be among the antiques at Flabob.

On Saturday, there will be a pancake breakfast sponsored by Flabob Express, the DC-3 group. Flabob is staging their Open Hangar and Historic Display on that day. Jim Spee will be discussing the Aeronca designs with EAA Chapter One's active Design Group and another speaker will be addressing the Aeronca owners on Saturday afternoon. There will be a catered dinner Saturday evening in the Chapter One facility.

At breakfast at the Flabob Cafe on Sunday morning, participants will swap stories and tall tales one more time before departing.

One Aeronca Chief is already at Flabob. It is an aircraft that was restored by students in the Riverside area and then flown to the Oshkosh AirVenture. Today it is being used to provide flying lessons to other young restorers.

For further information contact Jim_Spee@hotmail.com or visit www.aeronca.org.

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Plane of the Month:
David Lessnick's
Piper Comanche

Calendar



March 2011

4th – First Friday Flicks

Chapter One Hangar - 5 p.m.

12th – Young Eagles

Chapter One Hangar - 8 a.m.

12th – Chapter Meeting

Chapter One Hangar - 1 p.m.

12th – Board Meeting

Chapter One Hangar - 3 p.m.

19th – Design Group Meeting

Chapter One Hangar - 9 a.m.

26th – Riverside Air Show

Riverside Airport - all day

April 2011

1st – First Friday Flicks

Chapter One Hangar - 5 p.m.

9th – Young Eagles

Chapter One Hangar - 8 a.m.

9th – Chapter Meeting

Chapter One Hangar - 1 p.m.

9th – Board Meeting

Chapter One Hangar - 3 p.m.

16th – Design Group Meeting

Chapter One Hangar - 9 a.m.

May 2011

4th – First Friday Flicks

Chapter One Hangar - 5 p.m.

14th – Young Eagles

Chapter One Hangar - 8 a.m.

14th – Chapter Meeting

Chapter One Hangar - 1 p.m.

14th – Board Meeting

Chapter One Hangar - 3 p.m.

21st – Design Group Meeting

Chapter One Hangar - 9 a.m.

Customized Comanche to show at March meeting

(Continued from Page 1)

He next set his sights on the PiperJet, then became excited about the Diamond D-Jet and the Cirrus Jet. So many choices.... "It's now late in 2008 and I'm still hot about owning the Cirrus Jet when it happens. . . Lehman Brothers filed for bankruptcy. This was the largest bankruptcy in U.S. history and marked the beginning of a global seizing of the credit markets. This was a game changer. My business was negatively impacted immediately. Overnight, the sources of financing for my development projects dried up. To make matters worse, I had several large deals, where I was the seller and expected a nice payday, fall out of escrow," Lessnick said. "Of course the financial crisis didn't just affect me. The shock waves reverberated throughout the world and no industry was left untouched. General Aviation would be hit hard. Overnight the world had changed for the airplane manufacturers and their suppliers. While everyone kept a good game face, the fact was (and still is) most of the VLJ programs were in precarious situations. The 'million dollar' jet was going to be closer to a 'two million dollar' jet if and when it ever got produced. This combined with the fact that my income had drastically changed caused me to reassess my plans."

Lessnick was becoming more envious of the slick looking, sexy styled newer planes. "After all," he said, "a few of the newer planes were starting to 'get it.' Some GA interiors were starting to look more like the fine autos than traditional, utilitarian styled light aircraft.

"I started to daydream about what my 1964 Comanche could look like if I did a spinner to tail restoration. I like to watch all the cable programs where true craftsmen get their hands on an older, outdated car and breathe new life into the design by adding all sorts of unique modifications and materials. What if I 'pimped my plane' like these guys 'pimped their ride'?"

Lessnick did extensive research into what was available. "I wanted an interior that was like crawling into an Aston Martin or a Ferrari, rather than into a utilitarian GA airplane," he said. His research turned up little that was available. Two planes that caught his attention were the Icon A5 and the 2008 AOPA Sweepstakes 1970 Piper Archer.

"The ICON A5 exuded cool," he said. "It looked like a piece of sculpture from every angle and the interior looked like a Porsche or BMW. The AOPA sweepstakes plane had a gorgeous paint scheme, a glass panel with the Aspen PDF as its centerpiece and handcrafted sport seats that were to die for. It certainly opened my mind as to what can be done to make an older aircraft look better than most new aircrafts being offered."

He was so impressed by the AOPA Sweeps plane that he wanted them to do the tip-to-tail restoration on his Comanche. "Turns out it was a shop called Oxford Aviation and as luck

(Continued on Page 6)



51P's panel...before and after restoration.



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SALE!

\$5

SALE!

**March
Special!**



**Price good
this month!**

Get 'em before they're gone!
Chapter 1 VanGrundsven T-shirts

Another great deal! These 2002 VanGrundsven commemorative T-shirts are on sale during the month of March for only \$5! These quality T-shirts available in various sizes—call for availability, or see us at the Chapter Meeting. Mail orders add \$5 shipping/handling (\$10 total; extra shirts add \$2). If you're local, pick up your shirt at the hangar for \$5 during our March 12 membership meeting, or through the week contact Jan Buttermore at 951-318-5215 . If you're not local, call Leon at 800-225-5865 to place your order. *Get 'em now! March will soon be over!*

From the Editor's Desk



On creating your own PlaneFax

Whether buying a car or an airplane, or anything used, the underlying principle is *caveat emptor*—"Let the buyer beware." There are usually no guarantees, implied or expressed, in the transaction. Wouldn't it be nice if there were a PlaneFax, equivalent to the now-popular CarFax? I've heard that there's a company trying to put together a "PlaneFax" type of deal, but as of this date, there is no such luxury for prospective plane buyers.

But airplane buyers have an advantage in this area—the National Transportation Safety Board website, where we can go in and search the accident records by N-number and dates.

A friend of mine was recently looking at a beautiful Starduster Too that he found on the Barnstormers.com website. The more he looked at the ad, the more he liked the airplane. It was just what he wanted, and it was low time, with no mention of a damage history. It was half-the-country away, but he figured he could take some personal days off work and fly it home to Pennsylvania, if he bundled up like a cold blooded snowmobiler.

First, he thought, he would check out the NTSB website. So he logged in to the website at http://www.nts.gov/ntsb/query.asp#query_start. The airplane was built in 1971, so in the date range, he put 12/1/1970 to the present date. He put the N-number in, hit "Submit Query" at the bottom of the page, and...Voila!

There was one accident report for that aircraft. He checked out the report, and in the "Factual" portion of the report it noted that "Examination of the airplane revealed the left main gear collapsed and left wing spar bent. Propeller damage was also observed."

In the ad for the airplane, the engine and airframe times were the same...some 200+ hours. So, who knows if the engine was torn down to inspect the crankshaft after the prop strike? My friend, who always errs on the side of caution, decided this was not the aircraft for him.

If any of you are considering buying an aircraft, make use of this invaluable resource. It could make you an *emptor* who is definitely *caveat*.

* * * * *

"Staycations" are in. For those who don't recognize the term, it means vacations where you stay close to home. With the cost of gasoline pushing—and soon to pass—\$4 a gallon, long trips in the family auto aren't so attractive anymore. There are more things to do within an hour of Flabob Airport than you could do in months of vacation time. We who dwell in the Southland are truly blessed in this area.

Chapter One is planning a 4th of July staycation this year. But don't stay at home...stay at Flabob. Our Flabob family is planning on getting together at the Chapter One hangar for an Independence Day celebration like we haven't experienced in years. We plan to fire up the chapter barbeque for you to roast your weanies or hamburgers (or steak, if you're feelin' frisky) on. Then we'll socialize till dark, when we have a fantastic view of the "burning of the mountain" (Mt. Rubidoux fireworks). Plan to join the family in this. You're more than welcome!



Photo by Ray S. Stits

Ross Gregory, from the FAASteam, presented Chapter One founder Ray Stits with the Wright Bros. Master Pilot's Award at our February Chapter Meeting. Among the hangar full of guests was his wife, Edith (standing to Ray's left).

Customized Comanche (Continued from Page 3)

would have it, it was located just about as far from Las Vegas as possible...in Oxford, Maine,” Lessner said. “When I committed to refurbishing 51papa, I knew I wanted Oxford to do the work.” So he recruited a friend to fly with him on the long cross-country that would get his plane’s interior and exterior to look like the vision he had created in his mind.

To make a long story short, he got it rebuilt and restored the way he wanted it, with a combination glass panel (including a Garmin G500 with synthetic vision) and steam gauges, new paint and interior. He took it to Oshkosh this year and won Best in Type.

Problem is, he has over \$200,000 invested in an aircraft type that typically sells for about \$55,000. Was this a wise financial decision? Lessnick wrestled with that issue for some time. As he tells it:

“After some back of the napkin math, I estimated it was going to cost me in the neighborhood of \$70,000 to \$80,000.00 to upgrade 51P in the manner I wanted. This was for a complete avionics upgrade, top of the line paint including clear coat, a completely custom interior and some airframe modifications including wing root fairings and newer style wingtips. In approximately two years I’d be looking at spending another \$30,000 for a overhauled engine. The total investment I was envisioning was going to be close to \$110,000. Add in my initial acquisition cost of the plane and the modifications I’ve already made to it and I was coming close to having \$200,000 invested in a plane that as-is, was only worth \$55,000. From a practical and strictly ‘return on investment’ analysis, this didn’t make sense. After all, I would NEVER invest over \$100,000 (in addition to initial purchase price) in a piece of real estate that was worth only half that in the current market. Or would I...?”

“The one thing that I know all of us airplane lovers share in common is the amazing ability to rationalize the amounts of time and money we spend on our passion. I typically think of return on investment in dollars and cents. But what about pure enjoyment? The latter is much harder to create a metric for, but none the less important – at least when we are talking about airplanes (wink). Getting back to my original question and framework of real estate, my answer is yes. If I knew I was going to keep a property for a long time and that it would bring me years of enjoyment and satisfaction, I would invest money in it knowing that I wouldn’t ever recoup the money if I had to sell in the near future. The final question I had to answer was what other airplane could I buy if I sold my Comanche for the market value of \$55,000 and added the \$110,000 I was willing to invest in it. You can see where I’m going here. I’d have \$165,000. Sounds like a lot, and it is. . .if I was buying a car. But, even in today’s market, you don’t get an awful lot of airplane for \$165,000. The Comanche is a great and proven airframe and I am very familiar with all its systems and flying characteristics. I realized that I could invest the \$80,000 now and \$30,000 in a few years for the new power plant and end up with a uniquely customized plane exactly the way I want it. What an opportunity. My decision was made. I told you us plane lovers were good at rationalizing this stuff.”

See this beautiful airplane and hear David Lessnick show and tell of its restoration at our Chapter Meeting on March 12. Many of you will read about this unique aircraft in the next few months in an issue of *AOPA Pilot*. Get an advance preview, up close and personal, by attending our meeting. The Young Eagles program begins at 8 a.m. Lunch is at noon, and the meeting begins at 1:00. We’ll see you there!

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60 Young Eagles flown in February

February's Young Eagle Flight Rally was another one of those "business as usual, everything went just fine" days. Thirteen great Chapter One pilots transformed 60 fledgling earthlings into Young Eagles who spread their wings for the first time.

The mini ground school was taught by Tiffany Felton, and preflight inspections instruction was done by Friend Deming. Friend recently passed his private pilots written ground school test, and is well on his way to earning his private pilot's license. In the same vein, one of the YE escorts, Mitchell Robles, is close to earning his private pilot's license also.

The instruction for the Boy Scout merit badges was conducted by Bob Lum and Al Gester. The scout groups are always cooperative and well behaved and courteous and we are always glad to provide this service to them.

There are some ground support people who work "under the radar" as it were, but perform a very valuable service. These are Charleen Rhoades and Kathy Rhom who check the parent consent forms for legibility and completeness. When this is not done, it "throws a monkey wrench into the works" of printing the certificates. Having to go back and re-do certificates that were printed wrong due to not being able to read the forms is a BIG bottleneck in the system. Thanks, gals, your service is greatly appreciated.

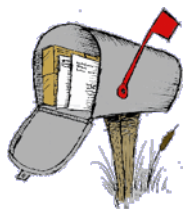
A great big thanks goes to everyone who did their part in insuring that things ran smoothly.

-Wes Blasjo, Young Eagle Coordinator

Pilots Who Flew:

Allyn Auck	Cessna 172
Larry Conley	Ercoupe
Jerry Cortez	Vans RV6A
Irvin Craig	Cessna 182
Dave Cudney	Cherokee 180
Barry Duble	Cherokee 235

James Meeker	Taylorcraft BC12 D
Leandro Mendoza	Cessna 150
Anthony Oshinuga	Cessna 152
Gerald Perry	Citabria
Ray Stits	Remos
Walt Wasowski	Piper Cub
Loreen Wynja	Cessna 172



FROM OUR READERS...

Wanted to let you know we were one of the EAA Chapters that Jim Pyle visited on one of his trips to Oshkosh. He happened to be returning for home and was coming down Hwy 36 in North Missouri when we were cleaning up from having our fly-in and had not picked up our sign on the highway to bring people in for our event. Seeing this, he pulled in and sat for a short while and visited and drank a cold pop with several of us. This would have been two or three weeks after Oshkosh and, near as I remember, he had spent time visiting after the airshow with different people that had him going by this late after the big show. I also remember he traveled through Nebraska on the way to Oshkosh to spend time with someone. Wouldn't it be great to travel and visit as he did with so many all in the name of fun. I happened to see his picture in the "Gone West" section of the January issue, and sure enough, I still had his chapter one business card in the pocket of my checkbook.

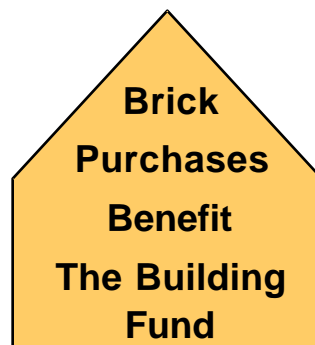
Cliff King, Chapter 944 North Missouri

Gary Sinise and his Lt. Dan Band to play again at Oshkosh

Back by popular demand, actor and veterans advocate Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band will return to EAA AirVenture in 2011 as the grand finale of a day-long salute to veterans on Friday, July 29. The 59th annual edition of "The World's Greatest Aviation Celebration" will be held July 25-31 at Wittman Regional Airport in Oshkosh. Performing at AirVenture for the second consecutive year and third time since 2008, the band will take to the Theater in the Woods stage for an evening concert hosted by EAA Warbirds of America and Disabled American Veterans. Last year's concert drew more than 6,000 attendees.

EAA Chapter One

Join us for our Chapter Meeting!



Some fixin's will be provided. Please bring salads, side dishes and desserts! Thanks!

*March 12th, 2011
at noon*

Join us at the Chapter One Hangar for an day of fellowship & fun!!

SEE YOU THERE!

Flabob Airport (RIR)

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL:

(951) 682-6236

Check our website at www.eeach1.org

We Make Flying FUN!!!

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