

The TAILSPIN



June 2008

ORLANDO YOUTH AVIATION CENTER

Chapter Meeting

Disappearing Airports

RAA seeks to protect recreational airfields

When it comes to discussions of airports disappearing, most of us visualize small community airports with paved strips and an FBO. But development and economic woes plague some real gems of flying—unpaved fields in out of the way places sometimes providing the only access to some of our country's best recreation and scenery.

These airports fly below the radar of most of us, but are a sort of sentinel species of the airport genus. Like disappearing spotted owls we may have never seen one and we're hardly aware they exist until they're almost gone. They represent true flying freedom, and their demise is a symptom and a signal of forces constricting one of America's most unique blessings—to fly where we want when we want.

A couple of months ago, Chapter member Tim Clifford introduced us to that flavor of recreational flying with some spectacular videos of back country airports. At this month's Chapter meeting, he will continue the discussion (and entertainment) and tell us about the Recreational Airport Association and what it's doing to hold back the tide swamping a very important part of our flying heritage. He'll also probably bring some more heart-stopping videos of bush planes challenging canyon walls on blind approaches to unimproved fields.

We're still waiting to hear if we have a plane for *Tarmac Time* at 6:30 pm, but come anyway for hangar flying. The meeting starts right after at 7:30 pm, at Showalter Flying Service.

See you then!

SeaRey On Scene In May

Arctic flying tales; a four-place amphib?

Kerry Richter of Progressive Aerodyne here in Orlando and SeaRey demo pilot Dan Nickens were our special guests in May. It had been a couple of years since Kerry last visited and it was nice to see him again.

Dan, who Kerry says has more hours in SeaReys than anyone else, flew in the company's demonstrator for *Tarmac*

Time. He and Kerry stayed busy answering questions about the plane—especially from Dave Martin who is building his own SeaRey kit.

During the meeting, Dan regaled us with stories of flying his SeaRey through Canada to Alaska and up to the Arctic Circle—while his wife followed along the whole way in their RV

Next Meeting Tue, June 17, 7:30 pm

Tim Clifford
Recreational Airport Association

Tarmac Time 6:30 pm

TBD
Weather Permitting

Showalter Flying Service, Orlando Executive Airport

Upcoming Events

OYAC Test Pilot Class	June 14, Sat. 12 noon to 5 pm Elite Simulation Solutions, Oviedo
Chapter Meeting	June 17, Tues Tarmac Time 6:30 pm, Meeting 7:30 p.m. Showalter Flying Service, Orlando Exec
Chapter Meeting	Aug 19, Tues Tarmac Time 6:30 pm, Meeting 7:30 p.m. Showalter Flying Service, Orlando Exec
OYAC Youth Aviation Class Start	Sep 6, Sat 9 am—12 noon Showalter Flying Service, Orlando Exec
Chapter Meeting	Sep 16, Tues Tarmac Time 6:30 pm, Meeting 7:30 p.m. Showalter Flying Service, Orlando Exec
Young Eagles Rally & Pancake Breakfast	Sep 20, Sat Flying 9 am—11 am Southeast Ramp, Orlando-Sanford Int'l
Chapter Meeting	Oct 21, Tues Tarmac Time 6:30 pm, Meeting 7:30 p.m. Showalter Flying Service, Orlando Exec
Chapter Meeting	Nov 18, Tues Tarmac Time 6:30 pm, Meeting 7:30 p.m. Showalter Flying Service, Orlando Exec
Young Eagles Rally & Pancake Breakfast	Nov 22, Sat Flying 9 am—11 am Showalter Flying Service, Orlando Exec

camper.

Then Kerry took over, explaining some of the upgrades on the SeaRey and the company's latest effort—a S-LSA ready to fly version and a new four-place model.

Thanks again to both Kerry and Dan for an entertaining evening.

Beginnings...from Endings

As I had mentioned before, I am in the throes of nailing together a SeaRey in my heated & cooled 40X60 basement, which makes life a whole lot more acceptable up here. The bird is pretty well along, fuselage basically complete, wings done, tail feathers done, all painted and lookin' good.

I do have a few extras which, while adding capabilities also add weight and complexity. The bird has hydraulic gear (couldn't get the oversize tires underwater to taxi up on land with the manual gear), electric flaps and trim, electronic engine monitoring system with NO gauges on the panel, just a blank screen to display whatever is pertinent at the time, xpdr, basic IFR panel, intercom, & navcom. Makes for a pretty full panel, not counting the mares' nest of wires behind it.

With all that stuff behind the panel and under the nose cover, I decided to modify the front deck and windshield so that I could lift them all off and open up the whole nose when needed to fix stuff up there. A little more work, but makes life down the road a whole lot easier. I am also thinking up a fairing - in system to streamline that draggy landing gear and stuff somewhat and maybe pick up a few knots that way.

Anyway, while sitting on a stool beside the bird while dragging wires around and through stuff, my mind sometimes tends to wander back to my early days aboard the carrier when the government gave me six guns, 2,000 horsepower, and bought the gas for me to go out and raise hell. I thought I'd died and gone to Heaven! Maybe it's the new airplane smell that trips it off - whatever, at times I can still smell the mixture of fuel, hot metal, leather, new paint, and sweat, with

the other thousand vague and unidentifiable odors that shouted "Airplane!" mixed in.

With it sometimes comes something that I never expected. The memories rush in from the end of my last flight as a fighter pilot, and suddenly I'm on short final for the boat, walking the rudder and looking for the "cut" from the LSO, chopping the throttle and slamming onto the deck and into the arresting gear. The flight deck crew rolls me forward onto the elevator, and as it starts down to the hangar deck I sit there and feel the rush of the cool sea air into the cockpit, and listen to the multitude of tiny sounds of an airplane shutting down - crinkling and popping sounds from cooling exhaust stacks, the fading whine of gyros winding down, the panel going dead, and the thought - this is never going to happen again.

Well it never has, in one way. Wars end, and thank God they do, but life goes on, and if you're really lucky one day you can find yourself sitting on a rolling stool besides the hull of a new airplane that you're bringing into the world, sorta like a new life, and you start to anticipate the new smells and sounds of the first flight of something that you have created. At its absolute worst, life is still something wonderful, full of endings and beginnings.

We are the lucky ones - lots of people NEVER get to know and feel flight, in any of its endless forms.

Be careful out there - and appreciate what we've got!

Bob

Words of Wisdom

You're Gonna Live To Be 100-At Least Official government tables prove it

If light-sport flying has any negatives, it's that it reminds us all that we're getting older.

Well, thanks to official government prognosticators, you can quit worrying about it. You're gonna live to be at least 100! No kidding—you'll find it in what the feds call Life Expectancy Tables.

Here's how it works: Say you've made it to 50 years old. Your life expectancy is another 34.2 years—or 84.2. Not bad. But if you live that long, your life expectancy is 9.1 years—or 93.3. By that age, you can expect to live another 4.6 years to 97.9, when your life span

should last another 3.6 years, making you 101.5.

Keep calculating and the years eventually add up to 111 with one more left to go. By then, you'll have big time bragging rights about being the oldest pilot. Of course, so will everyone else, but who wants to go flying alone all the time anyway?

Meanwhile, you've got lots of time left, youngster.

There. Now, don't you feel better?

OYAC Test Pilots Take Off

The Orlando Youth Aviation Center's *Test Pilot* course was a big hit for 24 graduates of the *Youth Aviation Class*.

Louis Turek planned the class and Stephen Gatlin arranged to have the kids explore flight in different aircraft on simulators built by his company Elite Simulations. The classes were held two Saturday afternoons, June 6 and 14 at Elite's offices near UCF.

The kids had to perform certain tasks of test pilots, such as stalls and landings. There were a few "crashes" but a surprising number of them did very well. Must be that video game thing.

The class will repeat in the Fall.