

# WIND IN THE WIRES



The Newsletter of Chapter 26, Experimental Aircraft Association ❖ Seattle, WA ❖ Volume XXVIII No. 12 ❖ December 2020

## President's Letter

This month's article is a hard one for me to write. We all have lots of flying friends, some casual acquaintances, and some close friends. I had considered my long time friendship with Ron Borovec one of those closer friendships. I always saw him at the meetings every month for the last 20+ years and probably when I was in Chapter 26 back in the late 60's. Although we didn't visit other than at EAA meetings, I always enjoyed those interactions. I will especially miss seeing him at Oshkosh. Nearly every year he and usually his brother would stop by and see my plane on display at the same place near the Homebuilders Headquarters. I always looked forward to seeing a local Seattle EAAer. Any time you hear of a plane going down you feel bad, but when it happens to someone you know, it really hurts. His knowledge and insights will be sorely missed.

**(Continued on page 2)**

*Virtual Meeting*  
*This month*

<https://meet.google.com/kbh-xuma-fyv>

*This month:*  
*Again:*  
*Virtual Meeting*

<https://meet.google.com/kbh-xuma-fyv>

*Meeting Topic:*

**Christmas**

*FUTURE EVENTS*

TBD what happens in 2021

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## President's newsletter (Continued)

When my brother and I rebuilt our L-2 Taylorcraft in 1967, the mechanic that we worked with always told us “don’t fight the weather”. I remember what he said, however I have not always followed it that close myself. I stay current on my IFR flying. I don’t particularly want to have to use it, but being aware of what to do and how to do it is my practice to stay safe.

December is our usual holiday party, but we can’t get together in person still. The next best thing is to have our computer meeting again and at least talk airplane



## EAA Free Webinars and News

1/6/21 7 p.m. CST It's Baffling  
Mike Busch

A complex set of rigid baffles and flexible baffle seals are critical in keeping your engine cool. In this webinar, engine guru Mike Busch explains how the cooling system works, and discusses how to diagnose and correct cooling system problems. Mike illustrates this with a real-life story involving a Cessna T210 whose front most cylinders always seemed to have higher CHTs than the others, and how Mike helped the owner cure this problem with the help of some smartphone photos.

1/13/21 7 p.m. CST Surviving Carbon Monoxide  
Prof. H. Paul Shuch

We all know that carbon monoxide is tasteless, colorless, odorless, and lethal. Thankfully it is also easy to detect, and simple to avoid. In this FAA Safety Team WINGS and AMT award presentation, Prof. H. Paul Shuch shares a recent experience which could have ended very badly, but fortunately did not. Don't watch this seminar (unless you want to save your life!)

## EAA Joins Aviation Groups in Addressing Court Regarding Warbird Case

November 25, 2020 – EAA has joined with AOPA, NAFI, ICAS, the North American Trainers Association, and GAMA in filing an amicus curiae ("friend of the court") brief in the case of Warbird Adventures, Inc., et al v FAA. The case is challenging a cease and desist order issued to Warbird Adventures by FAA in which the FAA alleges that the company is operating a Limited Category aircraft for compensated flight training without a required exemption. The Limited category was established shortly after World War II to accommodate surplus military aircraft that otherwise did not have a type certificate. While Limited airworthiness certificates are no longer issued, many warbirds flying today still operate in the category.

Limited Category aircraft, like Experimental aircraft, are prohibited from carrying "persons or property for compensation or hire" (FARs 91.315 and 91.319(a)(2)).

The petitioner in this case is arguing that training in a Limited Category Aircraft is not operating the aircraft for compensation or hire. This assertion is based on the FAA's specific actions as to Warbird Adventures, prior applicable FAA interpretations, and the lack of any specific regulation that prohibits training in Limited Category Aircraft. The FAA disagrees, and the petitioner has exercised their right to elevate the case to federal court and ask the opinion of a judge.

**(Continued on page 4)**

## EAA in warbird case

The participants in this amicus brief (called amici in legal parlance) are not weighing in on the merits of the petitioner's argument. Rather, the brief seeks to provide the judge with essential background to make an appropriately limited decision based on the key questions of the case and nothing more.

EAA and the other amici are concerned that an overly broadly worded ruling by the court could interfere with the right of Limited Category and Experimental Category owners to receive training in their own aircraft. While hiring such aircraft for training has usually been conducted via exemption or LODA, owners and operators have always been able to pay instructors to fly in their own aircraft. Such activities are essential for transition and recurrent training. Compensation to a flight instructor historically has been interpreted as compensation for instruction, not carrying passengers or property for hire. Recent FAA statements contain language that implies that all training in Limited category aircraft, compensated or not, requires an exemption. Such an interpretation has not been previously articulated or enforced by the FAA, but if the court were to approve of such an interpretation of the applicable rules, it would devastate the warbird community.

"Legal rulings and interpretations involving the Federal Aviation Regulations can have unpredictable outcomes," said Sean Elliott, EAA Vice President of Advocacy and Safety. "In joining and helping to write this brief, we aim to ensure that the ruling in this case does not have far-reaching consequences for warbird and homebuilt owners. It is vital that nothing hinders the rights of these owners to train in their own aircraft."

EAA participated in writing and filing this brief thanks to the volunteer work of the EAA Legal Advisory Council. This group of experienced aviation attorneys advises EAA and its members on key legal and regulatory matters free of charge. They are a prime example of the "members helping members" ethos shared by all EAA volunteers. We cannot thank them enough.

## Ron Borovec

ARLINGTON — A Bothell aviation enthusiast died in a small-plane crash Thursday north of Arlington, according to the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office. Ronald Borovec, 73, was identified as the deceased. He was flying an amateur-built, single-engine Odyssey aircraft.

A friend of the pilot first notified the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office around 8:30 p.m. that Borovec was overdue.

According to FlightAware, a database that tracks flights, the plane departed Tacoma Narrows Airport around 4 p.m. Thursday. The northbound two-seat plane was tracked until after 5 p.m., after traveling about 100 miles.

The friend gave deputies an approximate location of the plane — a patchwork of logged forest east of Highway 9. Around 10 p.m., the sheriff's office helicopter SnoHawk1 located wreckage and the deceased pilot off N Cedarvale Loop Road.

Borovec died of blunt-force trauma, the Snohomish County Medical Examiner's Office confirmed Friday. The cause of the crash was not immediately known. The pilot was a longtime advocate of experimental aviation. In the early 1990s, he published bi-monthly Roadable Aircraft Magazine. He was a past president of an Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) chapter in Seattle.



# Ron Borovec

Fellow EAA chapter member Ron Wanttaja knew Borovec for 35 years. He said Borovec was meticulous and excelled at understanding the mechanical side of aircraft. Wanttaja recalled annual seminars Borovec gave at the national EAA convention on “roadable” aircraft, which can also be driven on a street — essentially a flying car.

“He never built one himself, but he was a real aficionado of that,” Wanttaja said.

In a 1994 Christian Science Monitor article, Borovec discussed the conveniences and challenges of the futuristic automobile.

“Landing in a driveway is very appealing, (but) these things just don’t land any place,” he said.

As the article explained, the downdraft would wreak havoc on debris below.

“The grass might survive, but the flowers won’t,” Borovec quipped.

There are risks inherent in flying such planes.

“Homebuilt aircrafts are built by amateurs, maintained by amateurs and quite often even designed by amateurs, so that is all part of the sport,” Wanttaja said. “We try to reduce the accident rate as well as we can, but it is going to be higher than production airplanes.”

Just before the accident, Wanttaja said, Borovec was getting a transponder installed in Tacoma.

The National Transportation Safety Board described the plane that crashed as an “experimental” aircraft. NTSB investigators were arriving on scene Friday.

An NTSB official said a preliminary report should be available within a few weeks. The full investigation could take more than a year.

Borovec was public in his support for Democratic candidates in recent elections. He sent The Daily Herald occasional letters to the editor encouraging engagement with elected officials and supporting worldwide action to fight diseases.

In May, he wrote The Herald urging representatives to favor a global health approach during COVID-19 recovery.

On social media, he wrote that he worked as an engineer for a dental equipment manufacturer in Bothell.

“As the United States and the world face the COVID-19 threat, we must not forget our partners in low-income countries,” he said.

Thursday’s crash was the second fatal aviation accident in the region this month. On Nov. 11, two men died in a small plane crash near Langley on Whidbey Island after an apparent engine failure.

## On the Wreckord by Ron Wanttaja

RV-9 – Florida: The airplane took off about 38 minutes before sunrise. Shortly thereafter, a witness 4 miles southeast of the airport reported hearing the airplane fly over at a low altitude followed by the sound of impact. The ground scars and wreckage distribution at the accident site indicated that the airplane likely impacted terrain in a near straight-and-level attitude and at an airspeed within the normal flight envelope, suggesting that the airplane was under control at the time of impact. No anomalies were found that would have precluded normal operation of the airplane.

The pilot had recently been diagnosed with early dementia of the Alzheimer's type, and the cognitive and visuospatial deficits resulting from this disease likely impaired his ability to safely control the airplane.  
(8/24/2016)



## On the Wreckord by Ron Wanttaja

Kitfox – New York: During landing, a rudder pedal torque tube separated, which resulted in a loss of directional control and the airplane departing the right side of the runway.

Metallurgical examination revealed that the vertical torque tube for the right rudder pedal had fractured at a fillet welded intersection where it attached to a horizontal torque tube. The fracture surface exhibited a small thumbnail-like fatigue region followed by an overstress region. The pilot had assembled the airplane about 16 years before the accident, and it had accrued about 551 hours of operation. The actual kit model was manufactured 22 years before the accident, and 1 year later, the kit manufacturer published a service letter (SL) applicable to the accident airplane model, which advised owners that the company had recently noticed signs of fatigue in rudder pedal torque tubes. The SL instructed owners to inspect the areas for fatigue and offered a reinforcement kit. The accident airplane was not equipped with the reinforcement. (8/20/2016)





## On the Wreckord by Ron Wanttaja

Searey – Florida: During initial climb, the engine began running rough at 200 feet. The engine subsequently experienced a total loss of power. The airplane landed hard and struck an embankment, tearing off a landing gear leg.

Examination of the airplane revealed wiring that contained mismatched wire gauges and splices throughout the wiring harnesses. The ground wire for the master arm solenoid was disconnected from the back of the ignition switch. Without this ground wire, the battery was disconnected from the airplane's electrical system. The airplane's rectifier kept the fuel boost pumps running per the wiring diagrams; however, a postaccident engine run revealed that the rectifier was weak and only displacing 12.3 volts, rather than its nominal output voltage of 13.5 +/- 0.2 volts. It is likely that, during takeoff, the ground wire became disconnected from the ignition switch and the weak rectifier could not adequately supply the high electrical load requirements imposed by the fuel boost pumps, the landing gear motors retracting the gear, and the strobe lights. This degraded the performance of the fuel boost pumps, resulting in fuel starvation and a total loss of engine power. (8/23/2016)



# NEWSLETTER



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THE WIRES



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