



The Lippisch Letter

November 2011

Experimental Aircraft Association Chapter 33

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Matt moved to Iowa City area about a year ago from Monmouth ,IL where he grew up. He is married to Rebecca with 2 daughters: Delaney and Alexis 2. He is the line service manager at Jet Air ,Inc. in Iowa City(KIOW). He Started working with Jet Air in KGBG in 2001. He has a private pilot certificate with complex added. He plans to get his high performance added in a couple of weeks and is 3 hours into multi engine training. He is looking for a plane to get his tail wheel endorsement right now and is planning to start instrument training in the Spring. If that isn't enough he is also apprenticing in the Jet Air shop to get his A&P. He is also building a Mustang 2. He has purchased the flap, empennage and center section kits in February 2011 and finished the flap and is just about ready to buck some rivets to finish the center section.

Help Wanted

Denny Hodge, President

The key to the survival of any organization is involvement of its members. Get involved in Chapter 33 as we remain a vibrant part of the Eastern Iowa aviation scene for the next 50 years. We need the following positions filled for the 2012 calendar year:

Newsletter Editor

This position is responsible for gathering articles, pictures and news items from members and laying them out into a predefined newsletter template. This would be a great job for someone with some desktop publishing or Microsoft Word experience. Expect to spend 8-10 hours per month getting the newsletter ready for publication. If interested, contact any board member.

Social Chair

This position will plan and coordinate the social activities of the chapter. Primary activities will include planning of the fall (October) and Spring (March/April) socials, summer cookouts and other social events as desired. This position reports to the board of directors, but does not need to be a board member. The chair should feel comfortable recruiting the help of other members (or co-pilots) to assist with the planning and coordination of the events. If interested, contact any board member.

Program Chair

The Program Chair will take responsibility for ensuring we have interesting programs at each of our monthly meetings. As several months are already taken for other events (AirVenture, Fall/Spring Socials, etc.), only 6 – 8 regular monthly meetings need to be addressed. The primary activities of this position will be locating speakers – locally or regionally – to discuss topics of interest to chapter members. This position reports to the board of directors, but does not need to be a board member. The chair should feel comfortable recruiting the help of other members (or co-pilots) to assist with the planning and coordination of the events. If interested, contact any board member.

Educational Chair

This position will focus on developing opportunities for Chapter 33 to get involved in the aviation education of young people in Eastern Iowa. Specific areas included in this position are planning, development and coordination of a continuing Air Academy program in the chapter, interfacing with local school districts to offer speakers for classroom situations, and implementation of follow-up activities related to the Young Eagles program. This position reports to the board of directors, but does not need to be a board member. The chair should feel comfortable recruiting the help of other members (or co-pilots) to assist with the planning and coordination of the events. If interested, contact any board member.

PedalJet (KidVenture) Chair

The PedalJet Chair will coordinate the activities associated with the PedalJet Venue at KidVenture, a unique part of the AirVenture experience. This includes recruiting and scheduling chapter members to work at the venue during Airventure, as well as working with Marv Hoppenworth to learn how to maintain the fleet. This position reports to the board of directors, but does not need to be a board member. The chair should feel comfortable recruiting the help of other members (or co-pilots) to assist with the planning and coordination of the events. If interested, contact any board member.

Chapter Historian

The Chapter Historian will be responsible for maintaining the “official” historical record for the chapter. This includes organizing existing historical materials, including pictures, newsletters, important chapter correspondence and other materials, as well as identifying and organizing new materials as they are created or received. This position reports to the board of directors, but does not need to be a board member. The Historian should feel comfortable recruiting the help of other members (or co-pilots) to assist with maintenance of the historical record. If interested, contact any board member.

The Trip to Glacier Park

August 13 to 18, 2011

Written by Steve Ciha

For my family and friends, and for EAA Chapter 33

Glossary for those of you that are aviation impaired

AWOS	Automated weather observation service – available by radio
BFR	Biennial flight review – required by FAA for pilots to be current
Class Bravo	FAA Tower controlled airspace around a large city, like Chicago
Class Delta	FAA Tower controlled airspace around a moderate sized city
Climb Prop	A propeller designed to offer maximum climb ability
Cruise Prop	A propeller designed to offer maximum cruise but slow climb
Departure Control	FAA radar facility that can track aircraft and separate them
FBO	Fixed base operator – located at airports to service aircraft
Tower	FAA control tower that clears aircraft to taxi, depart, and land
VFR	Visual flight rules – FAA rules dictating means of flight
WAC	World Aeronautical Chart – like a road map, but for flying

Funny, weird, strange, coincidental, or perhaps another adjective would be more appropriate for this story. I shall use strange.

Day One

It is strange the way things work out sometimes. I have acquired many friends in our EAA Chapter over the years, and I enjoy their company. So when Tom Caruthers asked me if I wanted to go to Glacier Park by private airplane my interest was immediate. I have always loved being in the mountains, and never had the chance to go to Glacier. Tom Olson was also interested in going. The plan was to take 3 RV homebuilt aircraft the third week of August. We would each fly our own airplanes, allowing plenty of room to take lots of camping gear and whatever else we needed.

As the time drew close to the departure date, I had things happening in my life that were stressing me to the point that I did not feel mentally keen enough to make the flight. I asked to ride along in one of the two Toms' aircraft.

We met on the Friday evening before departure to load the aircraft. I planned to jump into Tom Olson's airplane and ride with him, since he has a climb prop. Me riding with Tom Olson would keep Tom Caruthers cruise prop equipped aircraft a lot lighter and easier to fly.

At 11PM the evening before departure, just as I was drifting off to sleep, the phone rang. I immediately recognized Tom Caruthers voice on the phone. Tom had completely planned the whole trip from start to finish. All the lodging and transportation were in place. He had the flight planning done, with the trip to be about 1100 miles broken into four legs. Airports were all chosen. So it made me laugh a little when he told me that in the hustle and bustle of it all, he had forgot to get his BFR taken care of and he was no longer qualified to fly as pilot in command. He asked that I ride with him and act as pilot in command since I was current with all pilot credentials.

The weather looked very favorable for our planned 3 leg flight that would result in an overnight stop in Billings Montana the first night. We met at 0730 and adjusted the aircraft loading to allow me to fly with Tom Caruthers rather than Tom Olson, and departed on the first leg, Cedar Rapids direct to Yankton, South Dakota. We climbed above a scattered layer of clouds that eventually became a broken layer. The head winds of about 30 knots were a little disappointing but otherwise the flight was smooth and uneventful until we tuned in the Yankton AWOS on the radio. We were about 60 miles away. Yankton was reporting an overcast layer at 1600 feet. We found a good hole to descend through and finished the first leg bouncing along just below the clouds and landed uneventfully in Yankton.



A farmstead below a scattered layer of clouds over Iowa

After stretching our legs and fueling the aircraft, we departed Yankton with the next destination being Rapid City South Dakota. The strong headwinds continued to slow us to about 125 knots over the ground. The skies had cleared though while refueling and remained clear the rest of the day. Rapid City is a class Delta airspace and we were surprised at how busy it was. We broke the flight of two apart and each called Tower for landing clearances. The controller asked both of us to each make short approaches ahead of a regional jet. After landing, we found the self-service fuel pumps on the end of the ramp and again fueled the airplanes and stretched our legs. We had completed the first two legs of the trip with one leg left for the intended first day of flying. So far the day was progressing almost perfectly per the plan.

But there are few things perfect in this world and today was to be no exception. I asked Tom Olson if we were going to fly by Mt Rushmore and do a photo shoot of Washington Jefferson Lincoln and Roosevelt. We had talked to a local pilot in the FBO that had coached us a little on how to do it. We needed to tell Rapid City Tower that we wanted to do the Mt Rushmore air tour and Tower would arrange it with Ellsworth Air Force base Departure Control. After contacting Tower, Tom Olson arranged the tour and after a short delay we were cleared to depart as a flight of two for the Rushmore tour. We would need to stay one mile away and at an altitude of 7700 feet which was close to the terrain on the South end of the fly by. Ellsworth Departure vectored us to the area and it was easy to pick out the familiar faces of the four presidents many miles away. As we flew by we got some pictures that were OK but not great. We were just a little too far away. Tom decided to make another run by for some additional pictures, and put his plane into a steep climbing circling turn to the left. Tom Caruthers asked me what Tom Olson was doing and I told him I didn't know for sure, but it was our responsibility to follow the lead aircraft. I think I forgot to mention that the day had turned kind of hot and bumpy. Those conditions coupled with the sharp climbing turn were enough to give Tom Caruthers a case of mild airsickness. My first clue that this was happening came when I realized that he was no longer the happy talkative joking person that he normally is. Another thing that was further complicating things was that there was a misunderstanding between the two aircraft on what air to air radio frequency we would be using once Ellsworth Air force Departure Control cancelled Flight Following. We were no longer communicating between aircraft. As Tom Olson flew lead, he tried in vain to reach us by radio. We were dutifully flying along about a quarter mile away, when Tom Olson did a sharp 180 turn to try and find us which he quickly did. I was aware that Tom Olson was flying over next to us to resume lead and expected to see him again soon. But I had other problems. Tom Caruthers mild case of airsickness had become a full blown case of turn green in the face airsickness. The good news in all of this is that both airplanes were once again talking to each other, but I had lost visual contact with Tom Olson, as I tried to help Tom Caruthers deal with his air sickness.



Mt Rushmore, near Rapid City, South Dakota

Tom Caruthers was no longer talking much to me. We were shoulder to shoulder, and eye contact was all I needed to tell me that he was in a bad way. The autopilot was engaged and we were flying along somewhere in Wyoming with a very sick man in the pilot's seat. To get the two aircraft both back in visual contact, we needed to find a small airport to both fly to. Once there we would regroup and continue the flight to Billings Montana. I took a quick look on my WAC chart and found that we should be near Mondell Wyoming. Tom Caruthers entered the identifier into the Garmin GPS as I called Tom Olson on the radio and asked that he proceed to Mondell. As we both flew toward the airport, radio communication between the aircraft started to make some sense as to where we were relative to each other. The air was hot and bumpy, and Tom was feeling worse by the moment. Ten miles away from Mondell, Tom took the maximum turn for the worse and out came the airsick bag. He was no longer able to fly the airplane and we were descending for the approach to land. Although my mental state was less than perfect I knew it was time to step up. I asked that he turn off the autopilot and let me hand fly the approach to the airport. I don't have an autopilot and have never wanted one. RV's are such fun airplanes to fly that I have always felt that putting an autopilot on an RV is like putting a potato sack on Miss America. So disconnect the autopilot and let me just fly the airplane, and that is what I did. I have built and flown two RV aircraft, and at this time have about 700 flying hours in RV airplanes. But all most all of this time is in the left seat, where the controls are familiar and well known to me. As Tom continued to fill the airsick bag, I flew the approach from the right seat. The best way I know to explain this to those of you that are not pilots would be to visualize driving an unknown car from the right seat, with your left foot on the pedals and your left hand on the steering wheel. It can be done, but it really isn't what you want to do.

I located the airport easily. With the runway perpendicular to the line of flight, it stood out from the surrounding terrain very well. I continued the approach, turning left onto the final approach to land. In the five minutes or so that it took to fly the approach, Tom regained his composure enough that he was able to flair and land the airplane.

We parked both aircraft and took a moment to regroup a little. I would have to say that Mondell Wyoming isn't the end of the world, but you could definitely see it from there. Nevertheless the FBO was open and had some soft comfortable chairs that provided a place to relax and heal Tom's tummy. Looking back at this I can realistically say that this probably was an emergency situation. But there was nothing anyone could do to help. I was just too engaged with everything that was happening to lose control of the situation. I was glad that I was flying with Tom Caruthers and was able to do the flying at the most critical point of the flight. We relaxed at Mondell for about an hour or so and Tom felt pretty good.

Sometimes it is just a good thing to cut your losses and call it a day. We were still about 250 miles from Billings, our rental car, and a nice comfy hotel room. Tom Caruthers felt fine or at least thought he did, so we thanked the nice lady at Mondell and launched the aircraft towards our final destination for the day. It was now about 1PM and the August heat and typical mountain turbulence was making itself more and more apparent. Tom's case of airsickness quickly returned as we bumped and pitched along at 8500 feet. A scattered layer of clouds just above offered relief from the turbulence, if we could just climb above them we knew it would be a smooth ride, but they were well above 11000 feet and we would need oxygen if we were to get above the cloud layer.

We did not have oxygen on board. Nevertheless, Tom initiated the climb to get on top of the clouds. Looking back on this moment,

I think it is indicative of just how bad he felt and how much he wanted relief. But it wasn't a good decision. I knew that the smooth ride would just be replaced with another problem that complicates air sickness, and that would be the lack of good oxygen rich air. I contemplated how I was going to discuss this with Tom so that my argument against the climb would make sense to him. I settled on making a radio transmission to Tom Olson that went something like this. " Say Tom, how high do you think those clouds are?" Tom replied back as I knew he would, " I would say about 11,000 feet, and we need to be at least 1000 feet above them." When flying westward, you need to fly even altitudes plus 500 feet. That means we would need to be at 12,500 feet to legally fly VFR. As the conversation between Tom Olson and myself transpired, it began to make sense to Tom Caruthers that we would not be able to climb above the clouds for the smooth ride waiting there for us. Tom started the descent back to our original altitude of 8500 feet and we continued to bump along through the afternoon turbulence. Looking at the WAC chart revealed that we were coming up to Gillette Wyoming – a class Delta airspace with a big city. I thought to myself, "let's get on the ground, spend a night in a comfy hotel and continue on tomorrow". I tried to get Tom Caruthers on board with this idea but he was intent on making Billings by the end of the day. We were perhaps 150 miles away and he was intent on making the first days flying go per plan. I will say one thing for him; he does not give up easily. He asked that I make any radio transmissions that were needed and to just let him concentrate on the flying and dealing with his airsickness. He started to coach me on using the autopilot and also with familiarizing me with the navigation equipment on board.

For those of you not familiar with afternoon summertime mountain turbulence, it just does not quit. It is constant, or so it seems when you do not feel well. Yet, Billings was getting closer and it looked like we may make it in spite of Tom's upset stomach. But as we were starting our descent into the Laurell airport just South of Billings the heat came pouring through the cockpit ventilators. Tom again took a turn for the worse. Out came the airsick bag and again I flew the approach from the right seat of a strange aircraft into a strange airport. At least I was getting used to it anyway. Back in Mondell, it had been decided that the Caruthers aircraft would take lead on the flight. The idea had been that it would be easier for us to just engage the autopilot and not worry so much about having to fly next to another aircraft. Now this decision would affect the approach. I was having difficulty finding the airport. In Iowa, airports stick out like a sore thumb against the green backdrop of the farm fields. Not so in Montana. Everything is dry, tan colored, and with little contrast to an asphalt runway. The airport was proving to be hard to find. I didn't understand the navigation equipment in the aircraft well enough to tell me which way to turn to find the airport. As I flew the approach and talked to Tom Olson, he gave me enough information to guide me to the airport and put the aircraft on final approach to land. Tom Caruthers again regained enough composure to flair and land the aircraft. But it was one of those times when the aircraft landed a couple of times. We had excessive speed when the landing gear contacted the runway, and there were a couple of extra bounces. Tom thought about a go around, but with 5000 feet of runway, it became apparent that we would be able to get it stopped in time. Those that fly say that any landing you can walk away from is a good one. This was one of those times. We fueled the aircraft and tied them down on the ramp for the night. Tom Caruthers had arranged to get the airport car for the evening. It was a big old Buick with electric seats that I didn't take the time to understand how to operate. By any standard, I am not a big man, and I am sure I looked like the typical old man with his nose about even with the dashboard. I like to drive fast, and that Buick would go. We made the trip into Billings and nestled into a nice hotel suite for the evening. We found the local "good place" to eat a little dinner and headed back to the hotel for the evening. I wondered to myself what the next day would bring. So far, the flight had been anything but uneventful.



Tied down at Laurell Montana

Day Two

I knew Tom Caruthers had the previous day's difficulty on his mind, because he ate a very Spartan breakfast. He is a big guy, and what he ate wouldn't appear to be adequate for the days' activities. By now, I had the electric seats on the Buick figured out and had it pointed toward the Laurell airport and zipping along at 75mph. Montana speed limits are nice! We arrived before the FBO was open. It was Sunday morning and perhaps they don't even open for the day? The aircraft were still there with canopies covered and tie down ropes in place. We had fueled the aircraft the day before so that didn't need to be done. We uncovered the aircraft and loaded them up. A good preflight was done, paying close attention to the engine oil levels. We had before us, a day of flying over very inhospitable terrain. For our safety, those engines needed to run well. In Iowa, and much of the Midwest, a road makes a good emergency landing strip. This is especially true of RV aircraft with their narrow wing span of 24 feet. Just about any road will work. Where we were going this day, there would be few roads.

The night before, we had laid out the WAC charts and took a second look at the route over the mountains of Montana. We plotted a route that would keep us away from as many rough and remote areas as possible. Rough and remote are relative to where you are, and for Iowa boys, we were perhaps out of our comfort zone. At least that is how I felt. I am sure this is not true for Tom Olson, having flown his airplane all over the US. He has multiple trips over the Rocky Mountains, multiple trips into Class Bravo airspace, and about twice the number of flight hours that I have. He is the guy I can always learn something about flying from. He is the guy I would trust my life to in any situation. He would lead the flight today from Billings to Kalispell Montana.



Tom Olson, posing for a picture somewhere over Montana

Flying in the mountains is a true exercise in risk management. In the end, it comes down to accepting the fact that you are in a single engine airplane over areas where an engine failure could prove to be very difficult to deal with. We launched and flew through the mountains at an altitude of 8500 feet. Multiple mountain peaks were well above us at over 10,000 feet. Snowcapped mountains this late in August are not typical, yet there were many this year due to above average snow falls in Montana. Helena was ahead of us, and used as a waypoint on our route. It is a Class Delta airspace, and we over flew it easily and progressed Westward. I should stop now and tell you all that the early morning air was cool and spectacularly calm. The visibility in the dry mountain air was perhaps 50 miles or so. The light haze in the air was from forest fires in Idaho, and it did make picture taking a little less than ideal, but compared to yesterday, the flight conditions were much better. Tom Caruthers was happy and chipper, with a big smile on his face again. We flew Westward past Helena perhaps another 40 miles or so and turned Northward flying up the Swan River valley between two mountain ridge lines. The Rocky Mountain range on the West side of the valley and the Swan Mountains on the East side. We cruised along at 8500 feet with multiple peaks again pushing well above 10,000 feet. It was flying like I had never experienced before. You don't fly point to point, you fly where you can. It is true see and avoid. Although the valley

was heavily forested, there were also several roads and a few airports along this valley that would allow some chance at an emergency landing if one was needed.



The Crazy Mountains East of Helena



The Swan Mountains, as viewed flying up the Swan River valley

But the airplanes performed flawlessly, obviously built by craftsmen well-schooled in the art of aircraft construction. The Kalispell airport lay just a few miles ahead, and we needed to start our descent. We had about 5000 feet of altitude to lose while flying between the mountain ridges. A sweeping left turn through the mountain ridge lines eventually brought us down to pattern altitude and we landed uneventfully in Kalispell Montana, after a flight of about two and a half hours. We had made it!



The FBO at the Kalispell airport, Kalispell Montana

The FBO on the field was named Red Eagle Aviation. Their aviation fuel costs were great, and they had free tie down space available across the field at the City ramp. The entire airport was fenced from the general public and this offers good protection to the aircraft. Tom had a nice new 2011 Ford Escape for me to drive, so I grabbed the keys and pulled it up next to the airplanes to unload our stuff. The aircraft were fueled and taxied across the airport to the tie down areas and secured for the next four days.

Tom Caruthers was a happy man and a hungry one too! After checking into our motel rooms for the evening stay, we headed for a good pizza place and filled him up! We took that Escape and pointed it toward Glacier Park to check it out a little. I have spent lots of time in Rocky Mountain National Park both as a little boy with my grandparents, and also as a man while building a Biaggi's restaurant in Loveland Colorado. I have hiked well over 300 miles in this park, with over half of it being solo on snow shoes during the winter months. I often would see no one all day while snow shoeing. I love the mountains! So I kind of knew what to expect in Glacier, or so I thought? I had prepared my body as well as a 59 year old guy could. I had used my daughters mountain bike all summer, putting on about 1000 miles to the point where I could pedal that bike for a full two hours and not break stride. I had lost about 20 pounds doing this as well, so I was ready for the mountains!

We paid the fee and headed Eastward up Going to the Sun Road. What an absolutely beautiful place this was. We were on the wet side of the mountain, in a lush green forest. McDonald Lake was one of the first things to stop at and take a picture of. A Black Bear liked it too, as it was along McDonald creek further up the mountain, performing for the people that had stopped to take a look. It finally got bored with us and climbed a tree much to the glee of us all.



Lake McDonald



McDonald Creek



Black Bear in the bush

The drive to Logan Pass was a little slow. It was, after all, a Sunday afternoon, and the Park was full of people. This road had remained closed until about July 4th due to excessive amounts of snow in the park. Water seemed to be everywhere, and I have never seen so many waterfalls in any park anywhere. Glacier Park is steep and rugged, and these waterfalls seemed to cascade off the sides of the mountains all over the place. The parking lot midafternoon on a Sunday was packed full, with nary a spot left for us. We headed the Escape back Westward down the mountains with a good basic knowledge of what Glacier Park was like. After about a two hour drive, we were back in Kalispell. A Dairy Queen along the way provided a good place for a little food and conversation before returning to our motel rooms for Sunday evening.

Day Three

I am very grateful to Tom Caruthers for planning the trip. I just didn't have the time. He had found this little place on the West side of the Park called Polebridge. We loaded the Escape with all of our gear and pointed it toward Polebridge by way of back roads. The lady talking to us from the GPS navigator kept trying to turn us around and head us back to civilization. We said NO! The idea was to get away from it all. You don't see a lot of rock roads in Montana, but if you want to go to Polebridge you will probably encounter them. Most people would not like Polebridge, but it fit me very well. Tom had rented a 35 dollar a night cabin for us. There is no electricity, no water, and precious little else in these cabins. There is also no TV, internet, or cell phone service. We couldn't be touched by the outside world. For 4 days there would be peace and solitude in my mind, and I so much needed that right now. Looking back at it now, I can truthfully say that it is the first time in a very long time that earthly problems were no longer in my mind and eating at my soul.



Polebridge Mercantile, located on the West side of Glacier National Park

We arrived at Polebridge about 9am and let them know that we were here. Since check in time was 3pm we took the Escape to Kintla Lake in the far Northwest corner of the park. Getting to Kintla Lake is no easy or quick thing to do, so perhaps one tenth of one percent of the people visiting the park actually make it there. If you do you will find a primitive campground capable of hosting 20 campsites. There is no way to get your Winnebago there. Not possible! The road is just one vehicle wide, and you don't need a speed limit sign on it either. It is just too rough to drive faster than perhaps 20 miles an hour. Potholes and wash outs would often limit vehicle speed to a crawl. Once there, you are rewarded with a view of a mountain lake that makes it all worthwhile. Iowans are not used to being able to see the bottom of a river 5 feet deep. Here you could see the bottom of a lake! We pulled our packs out of the Escape and got geared up for a hike along the North side of the lake. It was to be our "shake down" hike to get everyone used to carrying a pack. It went well. The worst comment I would have would be that Montana is at least 3 times bigger than Iowa, so they decided to grow their mosquitoes three times bigger as well. When those things bit you, you felt it! Tom Olson was prepared for this. He had the bug dope, and that solved that problem.



Kintla Lake, located very Northwest corner of Glacier National Park

So we hiked about 4 miles up the trail. Looking at the topo map showed that we were within just a few miles of the Canadian border. It was mostly a level hike with little elevation gain. There were some great views of Kintla Lake along the way. Wild flowers were in abundance, and Tom Olson had a good camera with macro mode that made picture taking easy. The return hike was uneventful and we made it back to the Kintla Lake campground after about 4 hours of hiking. So our 8 mile shake down hike had gone well. I was ready for bear, with a bottle of bear spray that said it would shoot 35 feet. I was using Tom Caruthers for bear bait. No joy on that one! Maybe tomorrow? The ride back to Polebridge was slow, but we did have the chance to see a couple of fox. We checked in at the Polebridge Mercantile and got not a key, but the combination to a padlock that was holding the door shut on our cabin.



Fox in the bush



Glacier Park has more wild flowers than I have ever seen anywhere

There is no way words can describe Polebridge. I will try my best. Opening the door to our cabin revealed a world perhaps 75 years

in the past. Lights were supplied by lighting propane mantle lights with a match. There is no indoor plumbing of any kind. No electricity either. There was an ancient box wood stove. The first evening a squall line moved through, so I shaved up some kindling and built a little fire in the stove to take the chill off the air. The stove is so old that the cast iron had worn away over the years and cracks would show the flame through the side of the stove. Knowing the way wood heating appliances work told me that the draft would not allow smoke to exit these cracks, and it did not. In short order we had heat.



Cabin #1 at Polebridge, Montana



Tom Olson and Tom Caruthers in Cabin #1 at Polebridge

We had brought some food with us, but since there is a nice little combination tavern / restaurant there, we decided to give it a try. The first clue I had to the unique nature of the place was when the waitress asked what I would like to drink. I said "water" and she said "there is the water cooler, honey" and pointed to an Igloo with a stack of plastic glasses next to it. Food selection was off of a blackboard menu nailed to the log walls of what used to be the home of William Adair. He had built this cabin about 100 years ago. He used a broad axe to smooth the logs on the inside so that wallpaper could be applied. In 1976 his home was converted to the

Northern Lights Saloon. Food was basic in nature, but was more than adequate to satisfy us all. A good night's sleep was had by me anyway. I think the two Toms perhaps did not sleep as well. I was on an air mattress on the floor, and it fit me well!



The Northern Lights Saloon in Polebridge, Montana

Day Four

About 5 in the morning I awoke to a good nip in the air. It was perhaps 50 degrees in the cabin. I rustled about getting the wood stove going. Polebridge Mercantile has one outstanding bakery, staffed by pretty college age gals working there for the summer. Their tourist season is packed into four months. Polebridge is open from June through September. It is then winterized and closed for 8 months. Let me tell you, those gals can bake! I would later learn that they go through 125 pounds of flour a day making things that I think they ship all over the place? Bakery for breakfast has always fit me well, and today was no exception for all three of us. That and a Mountain Dew had me ready for the hike today along Bowman Lake.

The road to Bowman Lake was much the same as the one to Kintla Lake, only shorter. Just a 5 mile drive today. The lake was spectacularly beautiful. We arrived just as a shallow cloud layer lay over the motionless lake. A reflection of the mountains on the East end of the lake was clearly visible in the water. We had found a rare event in the mountains, a day when the wind isn't blowing. A mile or two up the trail put us into a world totally devoid of any noise. When is the last time you can think of that happening? No noise of any kind. Total silence. Beautiful! Towering pine, spruce, and hemlock trees. With the absence of wind, the scent of the forest became very apparent. It occurred to me that there was no wildlife moving either. No birds. Nothing.



Bowman Lake, in the still morning



The three of us on the Quartz Lake Trail, by Bowman Lake. Picture taken with the time delay feature of digital photography.

Our hike for the day was intended to be a 4 mile hike along Bowman Lake that would gain 1300 feet vertical elevation. We had hoped to find a place where we could overlook the lake, but the forest precluded that from happening. Again, no bear to be found, but by golly, I was ready! We returned back to the Bowman Lake campgrounds and found the camp host and had a nice conversation with him. I asked about any bear in the camp and he told about earlier that morning when a man was sleeping in his

hammock. A bear came up and nudged his underside and woke him up. That would have been fun to watch! Camp hosts are great people to talk to and can tell some great stories. They do this as volunteers so they have to love their jobs, and dealing with all the problems that go with campers. When bears do appear in camp, they are usually dealt with by use of an air horn and other such means to scare them off. This must be done carefully, as a bear chased up a tree becomes a day long problem. A slow drive back to Polebridge netted us a good chance to see several mule deer. They are big! Another dinner at the Northern Lights Saloon provided for the evenings dinner. We rolled out the topo map on the picnic table on our porch and proceeded to plan the final day's hike. About that time, a local rode by on his mountain bike and we struck up a conversation with him. The result of which was that he suggested we hike the Highline Trail out of Logan Pass. I had bought a dozen cookies from the Mercantile. They have all different flavors, but mine is huckleberry macaroon. Tom Olson bought a few beers and we enjoyed them while looking Northward at some of the most unique mountain scenery that I have ever seen. It provided healing to the soul for me, a chance to disconnect from a sometimes difficult life.



Mule deer



The view looking Northward from our porch at Polebridge



Tom Olson and Tom Caruthers relaxing on the porch at Polebridge Mercantile

The next morning as we bought our pastries at the Mercantile, a pickup truck full of sacked flour backed up to the front door of the building. I watched as perhaps a 100 pound college girl picked up a 50 pound bag of flour and carried it into the store, her back bent in an arch to balance the weight as she bear hugged a bag of flour. There were many bags left in that pickup. I couldn't help myself, and had to help them unload that truck. They thanked me with a kind word and a smile that to me was priceless. O to be young again. We loaded up the Escape and headed to Logan Pass, arriving about 9am. There were a few parking places left so we parked and readied our gear for what was to be an 8 mile hike at a little altitude for a change. There was a little nip in the air and the wind was blowing too. I put several extra bottles of water in the bottom of the pack, along with what was left of our food.



One of the college girl bakers at Polebridge - check out the cash register in the background

The Highline Trail heads North and West out of Logan Pass. I have never been on any trail anywhere, including the Grand Canyon that has that much continuous risk of a serious fall. The first several miles of trail have sheer drop offs. The trail is, I would guess, about 4 feet wide at best. Perhaps my apprehension was because I am just getting a little older and wiser and realize true risk. A slip or skid on the loose rock would have meant a slide over the side and a long fall before you would stop somewhere below. A broken busted body would have been best case scenario. Death would be more likely. Extraction by Park Rangers would be difficult. So I walked slowly and carefully, and picked up an old pine limb along the way that I used as a walking stick to help with balance.



Tom Caruthers, Steve Ciha, Tom Olson at Logan Pass

The Highline Trail is an 8 mile walk to what is called the Granite Chalet. Here, if you have lots of money, can be rented a place to stay for the night to rest, relax, and get ready for a hike over a steep ridge to view several glaciers. All goods are transported to the Chalet by means of mule. Somewhere along the way, we had decided to continue the hike to the Chalet and then continue down the Granite Park Trail to a place where we could pick up a shuttle bus back to Logan Pass. I was not totally sure this was a real good idea. While my hiking partners were in good shape at this point in the hike, I didn't know if they fully understood how their bodies would react to a long hike conducted at moderate altitude. I reluctantly agreed to the modified plan. So at the 8 mile point at Granite Chalet, we rested a little and got ready for our 3000 foot descent down the 4 mile Granite Park Trail.



Tom Olson and Tom Caruthers on the Highline Trail, notice the attached hand hold cable



After 8 miles of hiking, the Granite Chalet came into view

Going down 3000 feet is definitely easier than going up 3000 feet, but it is still no easy task. Your feet, knees, and legs take a pounding doing this. As we approached the bottom of the hike, I could see the wear and tear on the two Toms' faces. I had several extra bottles of water in my pack and gave each of them some of it. We were down to two bottles at this point, and looking at their faces told me that we may need that and more. A little creek flowed down the mountain side and I took a few empty bottles and filled them just in case, tearing off the labels so I knew they were perhaps contaminated and just to be used as a last resort against extreme thirst. A quarter mile away was the shuttle bus departure point and we made it just in time to take the last few bottles of good water and have a good drink before getting on the shuttle bus for the half hour ride back to Logan Pass. We had made it. Over a three day period, we had hiked 28 miles, and seen some of the most spectacular mountains anywhere in the world. Glaciers is awesome, and remember this, if all you ever see is Going to the Sun Road, you have not seen much, but you have seen more than most!

The Escape was still there waiting for us, and I think the two Toms were happy to let me steer it back to Kalispell and civilization once again. We checked back into our rooms, cleaned up, and once again went to the Dairy Queen for dinner. I upgraded my chili dog combo to include a chocolate malt. Back at the motel we unfolded the WAC charts and planned a modified route back through the mountains. Weather looked to be great for at least the first two legs of flight. We would stop once again at Laurel Montana, and then go direct to Miller South Dakota, and then Cedar Rapids. This would mean a three leg flight home.

Day Six

We loaded the aircraft early in the morning, about 7am I believe it was? The FBO was open but no one there, so I parked the Escape next to it and locked the door with the key inside. I walked across the runway to the two aircraft on the other side of the field and watched Tom and Tom ready their airplanes for a one day flight that would take a car at least two very long days to get home. Some would say that we are crazy or nuts or something like that for flying these aircraft. I would disagree. It is one of the very few things I do that allow me to totally disconnect from the issues of life. When I fly, I am totally focused on flying. Nothing else enters my mind, and therefore peace exists in my soul. So if you read this and wonder why we should do these things, I can't speak for others but those are my reasons. Done with good planning and thoughtfulness, flight in a small aircraft is safe and fun.

The flight back to Iowa was largely uneventful. On the final leg from Miller to Cedar Rapids, the weather included some thunderstorms that were occurring in South Dakota, Iowa, and Nebraska. There were convective SIGMETS issued for thunderstorm activity, so we knew we would need to pay close attention to them. Tom Olson's vast flying experience guided us around these areas. The head winds we had on the trip Westward were no longer there, and had been replaced with tailwinds, or at worst, neutral winds. At times we saw groundspeeds of 230 miles an hour. This combined with a three leg trip put us back in Cedar Rapids at 5pm, even with losing an hour in the time change between Mountain and Central time zones. The air was smooth, the aircraft performed flawlessly, and the landings were uneventful.

Somewhere along the way, I asked Tom Caruthers what he would have done when he became ill if I had not been along for the flight. Together we settled on the idea that he would have stabilized the aircraft in level flight, and engaged the autopilot until such time as he was again able to fly the aircraft. It all sounds so good and plausible now, but at the time, I realistically don't know if it would have happened. So a peculiar set of circumstances placed me in the right airplane at the right time, and I guess that is how I would prefer to remember it.

The Day After

Even though I was back in Cedar Rapids late Thursday, I decided to not return to work Friday morning. I needed a day to get my head back together with the idea of returning to work Monday morning. So I used Friday morning to unpack and go through mail and do all the other things that piled up on me while gone. As I sorted through my backpack I came upon a half full bag of cookies bought at Polebridge Mercantile. I opened the bag and found two huckleberry macaroon cookies, took em out and microwaved them for about 10 seconds. Boy were they ever good! My mind drifted back to those six days of Glacier Park and how good it was to totally disconnect from everyday life. To spend time with good friends. To forget about life for a while. To heal the soul. To sit on a picnic table on the North facing porch at a little cabin in Polebridge Montana and look out at those spectacular mountains, and drink a beer with friends. I hope to make it back to Polebridge one day, perhaps with some grandchildren in tow, you can come too, if you want to.

Fly Market

Van's RV-8A project for Sale. This includes tail group, wings, and fuselage all built past the quick build stage. Sheet metal work is 99.9% completed. Van's cost for these components right now would be \$26,790 dollars, delivered to your door, (with way less work done) I am willing to sell what I have for 20,000 and if it goes to someone local, will assist them with completing the project.

Steven Ciha, phone 319-533-4543

Next Meeting:

Vijay Pisini has graciously invited us to his home to show us his progress on his RV-10 project. Snacks and refreshments will be provided:

Vijay Pisini's RV-10 Project Visit
504 Deer Run DR NE
Cedar Rapids, 52402

Time: noon-2:00 pm, Saturday Dec 3rd. 2011



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