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Experimental Aircraft Association Chapter 33

A monthly publication of the Dr. Alexander M. Lippisch Chapter of the Experimental Aircraft Association, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

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From Reno to Idaho to Indiana Jones

By Rick and Jack Rezabek

The Journey continues (From October issue)

Mon, 9/21 Pre-flight for the McCall flight. Another 3 hour leg ahead. Say goodbye to the Ground Crew, and dump as much race related baggage onto them for the car trip back to CA. We keep the Idaho essentials onboard, including a new acquired Winchester 22 magnum lever action rifle for Rick's fiancée, Cheryl, and a couple of her collection of Thermos picnic jugs, with emergency water supplies inside. Our flight to McCall starts with another glitch. We can't raise the tower on the radio, even though we understand the tower would stay in operation for another half hour. Reno-Stead is normally an un-towered field, so we switch to CTAF and report our intentions on CTAF. Only after takeoff behind a Fairey Firefly, and a climb out to the North (around a couple of the pylons of course) do we discover that one of the hundreds of Stinson passengers of the last few days has tweaked the radio volume knobs, and turned our volume down. Lesson to self again – Massive Pre-flights, especially every knob,



button, and switch in a cockpit after any public displays. Many apologies to the Reno Tower crew, who we are sure were frustrated by our inability to hear their response after our calls to them on the radio. We're still waiting for that nice letter from the FAA, which we pray never comes.

Flight to McCall was uneventful after that, with miles and miles of nothing but peaks and dry lake bed valleys. Geologists call this region, Basin and Range, for obvious reasons. Rick advises that his strategy for flying a GPS planned route in these areas are to fly the terrain first and foremost, with the nice GPS red line as a guide only. We fly up one valley and cross over the adjacent mountain range peaks only when the next valley over is better for our course.

Flight following is the nature of the day, with contact to Salt Lake Center for most of the way, when we are flying high enough (above 8500 ft), that they can pick us up on radar. Brother and Son John Rezabek and Mom meet us with smiles and hugs all around. Mom flew in commercial to Boise days earlier, on Saturday. Idaho weather is gorgeous, and the area is beautiful, almost beyond compare, with McCall sitting on the south shore of Payette Lake, a miniature version of Lake Tahoe long time ago. One of the locals says his favorite bumper sticker is: Welcome to Idaho – set your clocks back 30 years. Our favorite too.

A hangar awaits the Stinson. This will be its first trip to a hangared space, but alas, not to be, as the local airport is tearing up our hangar ramp area and laying new asphalt. Job should finish just as we are about to leave again.

A quick trip to the grocers in town and steaks on the grill at the house in New Meadows ends a nearly perfect day (still can't get that perfect sortie in the books).



Tues, 9/22 First day in Idaho to try to relax from the hectic pace of the Reno Air Races include a trip to the local County Seat for a DMV visit for an ATV we bought as an airport tug (line at the door is a wait time of Zero). A big cultural smile on Rick's face from life in Los Angeles. Stop at the insurance office to get the boats and ATVs covered and finish with a purchase of a pindtle hitch setup for the ATV tug. A towbar has been ordered weeks earlier and is awaiting assembly at the house.

Just as Rick and Mom are about to pop into the grocers for the nights meal of hamburgers, a call from Rick's flying realtor friend, Mike Chapman, from the airport, reports that a movie crew has just flown into town, and they would love to talk to the Stinson owner. They are in town for some flying footage the next two days with Harrison Ford, and as Harrison isn't due in with his Beaver and Husky till mid day tomorrow, would it be possible to shoot some video of the Stinson? And oh by the way, the light is really the very, very best at sunrise, and would it be possible to clean up the airplane, as the week of Reno dust and jet fuel has left the tops of the wings a bit ratty?

Rick is skeptical at first, but upon learning that this crew shot the movie One Six Right flying sequences, he knows these guys are the real deal, and knows you can't get better in flight footage than this.



Rick has been through a couple of air-to-air shoots with the Stinson, and knows what kind of flying that entails, so a quick deal is struck with a pro, McCall's Northwest Backcountry Aviation co-owner, Kasey Lindsay, to fly right seat, and do most of the maneuvering flight segments.

A quick trip to the house, and Mom is nearly ready to put the burgers on the grill when Rick and I jointly conclude we need to use this last half hour of sunlight tonight, and get the airplane wiped down. Cheryl's Thermos jugs come in handy as the water supply, and off to the airport (11 miles away) we go. Mom has the - you've got to be kidding – look for about 30 seconds, but knows there isn't a way to win this one. Rick pronounces – “Welcome to my life.” She comes along with promises of a dinner out after we're done, and within 30 minutes of time on 8 ft step ladders, we have the Stinson show ready again.

Wed 9/23 Morning brings a pre-dawn wake-up call, and a quick trip out to McCall airport. We briefly discuss the mission plan with the helo video crew, get a quick look at their million dollar video camera setup, and meet many of the production folk. It's impossible to know who's in charge, except for the flying crew. The first takeoff sequence comes with the helo airborne first, an accompanying Cessna 180 flying also in the pattern above, and the Stinson taking the runway for a dawn takeoff with Rick at the controls, Kasey at his side, and me in the back seat. Mom has the wisdom to stay on the ground for this set of flying, with a promise to go on a more sane flight later that morning. John decides to make better use of the morning for a morning elk hunt with his bow in the local area, with only a week left of the elk bow season.

First pass at a takeoff video sequence calls for a return to base and landing, as the sun hasn't poked its way over the mountain ridges yet for that perfect light. Kasey grumbles that he tried to tell them that yesterday, as the 0630 meet up at the airport could have been an hour later.

The rest of the morning flying sequences go well, with Kasey getting detailed instructions from the video crew to hold that turn, bank hard right in front of the helo, slow up as slow as possible, then bank hard. Professional flying over a mountain lake with a Stinson and a helicopter doing a dance at 1000 ft AGL at dawn. It doesn't get any better than that, unless you are in a lake house trying to catch some more sleep. No calls to the



airport FBO, though, where they said, if anyone called, their response would have been – Yeah, wasn't that great??? Idaho does have the second highest pilot population density in the United States, second only to the Great State of Alaska, so aviation is a cherished lifestyle up there also, another great reason to love Idaho.

Promises of copies of the DVD for the Harrison Ford event, an honorary dedication to his aviation service to General Aviation from the Denver Wings Over the Rockies Museum in November, and rumors of a possible Discovery channel show, and an invite to dinner that night end that segment of adventure. A perfect sortie, if ever there was one, with no room for anything less.



After landing, a quick turn to make good on the promise to Mom to take her up for a flight around the lake, the local area, the Meadows Valley next door, and over to John's hunting grounds, make for a nice end to a great morning.

Refueling at the self serve pumps, and suddenly, on engine start, the starter won't engage. All circuits appear dead. Rick jumps out of the bird, with mags checked off 3 times, hand turn the prop, to see if a set of points are at just the wrong position, another attempt, and nothing. Dead as a doornail. One of the movie crew recommends the ever successful maintenance strategy, hit it with a stick. Rick opts for handing it over to Roger Morris and the McCall Aviation maintenance shop. Theorizing of causes and the effects of a fix – Pratt & Whitney engine parts – relatively easy to find; Stinson airplane parts – we might be here for a while – darn.

We go back into McCall for dinner at the suggested 8:00 PM meet time, and find no one has shown up yet. The movie crew are reported to be out catching that last bit of light with Harrison Ford in his Beaver. We decide to go watch out on the airport ramp as they fly well into dark, wondering how you catch any footage with nav light and strobes running and saturating the image. We find out that's what a million dollar video setup gives you – good images in marginal light, but the crew later admits, that last set of filming was just too dark.

Dinner with Harrison Ford and the crew was laid back and fun, with a fantastic meal to match. Hangar flying discussions were the order of the evening with only a mild debate on politics and international troubles in the world. Home by 11:00PM. Rick again – "Welcome to my World." Sometimes it's not so bad, but it sure burns up the hours.

Thurs, 9/24 A simpler day, riding on the ATV's, assembling a towbar for the Stinson, and a call to come out to McCall Aviation for a possible ops check on a fix. The Stinson has large fuses under the co-pilot floorboard, as a part of the starter circuit. Connections seemed less than solid, with some small corrosion. First ops check is hopeful, but, no go. Discussions of how to dig deeper, with removal of the cowl, and chasing electrical circuits in a 72 year old airplane. No, we don't have a detailed schematic..... Maybe we will have to stay.....Dinner for the night is burgers from 2 days ago. They taste great.

Fri, 9/25 Friday morning brings a need for shooting in the morning. That Winchester 22 Magnum has a great feel, and a nice crack to the shots. It even gets reasonably sighted in with some help from dear old Dad. (Jack shows us all up with his first freehand pistol shot nailing a claybird fragment 70 yards out. He also goes 3 for 3 with the shotgun and claybirds. We are in awe, even when we remember how he used to be the Iowa State Pistol Champion back in our younger days.) A return to the house and cell phone coverage brings news that Roger Morris's team thinks they have the Stinson repaired. We might not have to stay over..... darn. Dinner plans with Chapman's and a before dinner visit with Rick's business partner, Russ and Trish Stromberg at their house in McCall (they flew in from Seattle in Russ's Cessna 414A), show we are going to be driving in, back, and into McCall a bunch in the next few hours. Rick – "Welcome to my World, act three."

A/C is fixed. Yep, it was a vibration induced failure. Just a tightening up of some of the starter cable connections did the trick. So, we lock in plans to fly Mom down to Boise for her airline return flight home to Cedar Rapids tomorrow. No alcohol past 9PM, but dinner events are a great time with great people anyway you look at it.

Sat, 9/26 Rick and I fly Mom to Boise's Gowen field (BOI) to catch a United Airline flight home. Much haze from fires in eastern Oregon fill up the Treasure Valley. Visibility down to 4 miles. GPS tracking to the airport puts planned flight vector 90 degrees to runways 10L and 10R, so offset to the West, for a base leg entry to final. Cleared to Land. Cannot see the huge gray airport against the brown fields in the gray skies. Kept zooming in on the GPS map to line up turn to final, and when we finally make the turn to runway 10L, discover we are over the runway numbers at about 500' AGL! Holy Smoke, (pun intended) it is right below us!

The Reliant is a great airplane for descending in a hurry. Nose Up, speed down, flaps at 120MPH, and we land at midfield of the blessed 10,000 ft long runway, with Boise Tower Controllers surely shaking their heads. Lesson to self, beware base leg entries, especially when visibility is poor. Plan for a long final, and fly to some other waypoint away from the field if possible (hard to GPS flight plan for it, when you don't know winds at destination before the flight).

Sure is hard to have a perfect flight. Our return to McCall was as close as it gets. We didn't have any smoke problems up at McCall and had no problem finding Boise airport on departure.

Afternoon brings one more local sortie as Rick takes Russ and Trish Stromberg for their first ride in the Stinson. Russ is a retired Marine Corps Colonel and squadron commander of the famed Blacksheep Squadron, and spent a large part of his career in AV-8A and AV-8B Harriers. He was a huge help in Rick's Lockheed Martin X-35 project, in getting Lockheed up to speed on USMC STOVL flight ops and tactics, particularly with the flight controls group.

An afternoon of flying over Payette Lake and back over the Meadows Valley again, bring the leisure flying pace of the Stinson home to a good friend and pilot, who doesn't get that opportunity in his twin engine Cessna hotrod. Yeah, he's jealous.

Nighttime brings a dinner of salmon and a game of Wii bowling with Russ, Trish, Rick, and John and myself. Next day is the dreaded flight away from paradise, back to the Los Angeles basin.

Sun, 9/27 Return Agua Dulce. 2 legs. McCall to Reno-Stead to Agua Dulce. 6.7 hr, 700 miles . Stop at Reno-Stead, this time all is quiet. Spirit of Texas, a Hawker Sea Fury is still on the ramp with mechanical troubles, and Voodoo is in a hangar, waiting on an engine swap. Skies clear, cruise altitude 10,500 & 8500 ft to get a bit warmer in the cabin (temp at 10,500': 45 deg F), temp on ground: near 100 deg F. One of many differences from the life in Idaho.

All in all, one for the books.



Last Meeting - Mission Aviation Fellowship

For our October meeting, Roger Kolb recounted his experience with the Mission Aviation Fellowship. Many thanks to Rodger for coming out to our meeting.



Next Meeting - Velocity Project Visit

John Tvedte has agreed to host a project visit meeting down in Solon for our November meeting. It will be Saturday Nov 14th 10:00am-noon and he is at 2682 Hidden Valley Tr. NE, Solon, IA 52333. We will also be having elections as well. I do have a volunteer for Vice President from Denny Hodge.

December Meeting & Banquet

Our Holiday Banquet will be Dec 15th (Tuesday) 6pm-9pm (Social at 6:00pm, dinner at 6:30pm). Jim Jones from Newton, IA. His presentation: The Search for, and Recovery of, my Uncle Jim's B-24. Jim was named after an Uncle who died in the co-pilot seat of a B-24 during WWII. Using slides, artifacts and photos, this presentation tells my story of the search for and recovery of parts of Uncle Jim's bomber. The banquet will once again be at the Clark Alumni House at Coe College, Cost: \$20.00 per person. Buffet will include: Carved Roast Pork Loin, Chicken Cordon Bleu, Wild Rice, Potatoes, Corn O'Brien, Broccoli/Cauliflower, Caesar Salad, Pasta, Fresh Fruit Tray, coffee / iced tea for drinks, Cheese cake for dessert

RSVP TO: Janet Blackledge by Dec 10th ph: 319.362.2625 or email: jojantrouble@aol.com

Young Eagles

We a couple of very successful Young Eagle Events in October. We flew 29 at Washington and 61 in Maquoketa.

Mark Navratil & Steve Willhoite Flying Kansas City Style



Chapter 33 Calendar

Nov 14 10am-noon Chapter meeting, Project visit
John Tvedt, Velocity, Solon, IA

Nov 14 6pm-9pm Iowa Aviation Promotion Group
Annual Meeting. - FAA FAST team Safety Seminar presented by Paul Berge and David Kawishky. Paul's topics include year around TFR's, Special Use Airspace, traffic pattern procedure, trouble spots, braking action reports, and landing mistakes and cures. Dave will talk about winter flight, IFR and VFR, including in-flight icing. Iowa Aviation Heritage Museum Tours

Dec 15 6pm-9pm Holiday Banquet, The Search for, and Recovery of, my Uncle Jim's B-24, Clark Alumni House at Coe College

Jan 30 11am-2pm Annual Chili Fly-In, Greenfield Municipal Airport

February 19-20 Annual Midwest Aviation Maintenance Symposium and Trade Show, Airport Holiday Inn, Des Moines, Iowa



Health care reform that all pilots can believe in!

In The November 2009 Issue...

From Reno to Idaho part II, Mark Navratil & Steve Willhoite Flying Kansas City Style



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