

# The Upwind Flyer

Your *Scentinel* for Chapter Happenings

October 2020



## Flying Stinkers Tour Classic Ford and More at Yankee Air Museum

By Chris Gordon

An executive order limited and socially distanced group of Flying Stinkers convened a special chapter gathering at the historic Hangar 1 at Willow Run Airport on Tuesday, September 8, thanks to the hospitality of Colonel Ray Hunter (USAF, Retired) and the Yankee Air Museum (YAM). The group enjoyed an evening with the YAM Air Adventure fleet of flyable aircraft, highlighted by their newest acquisition, a gleaming 1928 Ford 4-AT-B Tri-Motor.

If you've ever seen a Ford Tri-Motor in person (Oshkosh anybody?) the word "gleaming" doesn't often come to mind, and we all contemplated the effort required to give this beautiful airplane's corrugated



Flying Stinkers visit the Yankee Air Museum's newest addition.

photo by Chris Gordon

skin that mirror finish. Could be the Tri-Motor will need a dedicated event separate from the annual YAM Bomber Buffing party, and Ray gave some hints the previous owner had a special crew and tools for the job.

The YAM Tri-Motor (serial number 4-AT-42) was originally registered as NC7684 and spent many years in airline service and with various private owners, including 24 years plying the skies over Lake Erie with Island Airways before a dual engine failure after takeoff from Put-in-Bay resulted in a forced landing that damaged the airplane beyond repair in 1977.

sufficient elevator authority to perform the aerobatics safely, so the new owner gave up on the vision and sold the airplane. Fortunately the Ford eventually ended up with a generous and caring owner who sought out YAM when he was ready to sell under terms that brought the airplane back to Michigan, just miles from its birthplace in Dearborn.



420 ponies that one.

photo by Chris Gordon

In 1992 a private owner with a vision for the airplane started an extensive restoration with renowned Tri-Motor expert Maurice Hovious at Hov-Aire in Vicksburg, MI. The airplane finally emerged as NC9610 in 2010, certainly better than new, but with some interesting manners. From 1932-1941, a pilot named Harold Johnson performed an aerobatic routine of loops, snap rolls, spins and hammerheads (!) in another 1928 Tri-Motor, NC9610, to the thrill of crowds across the country. Search the internet for Ford Tri-Motor aerobatics and you can see for yourself. The owner's vision was to replicate this routine in the newly restored Ford, and to this end the original 220-hp Wright J-5 Whirlwind engines were replaced with 420-hp Pratt & Whitney Wasp engines, used on the larger 5-AT Tri-Motor. Turns out the larger and heavier engines moved the CG forward enough that the restored Ford lacked

Stepping into the Tri-Motor is literally a step back in time, with wicker seats and a steep climb to the cockpit where a pair of Model T steering wheels and the simple array of instruments and controls (in triplicate!) convey an unmistakable Golden Age meets Garmin feeling from a very professional yet functional restoration. The cockpit is dominated by the beautiful wooden steering wheels, the triple throttle and ignition switches, and the giant lever on the floor between the seats. The Tri-Motor does not have flaps, this is a Johnson Bar brake lever. Straight back for both brakes, back and left for left brake, you get the picture. No toe brakes. The original 4-AT-B had engine starter

buttons on the floor by the rudder pedals, just like the Model T.

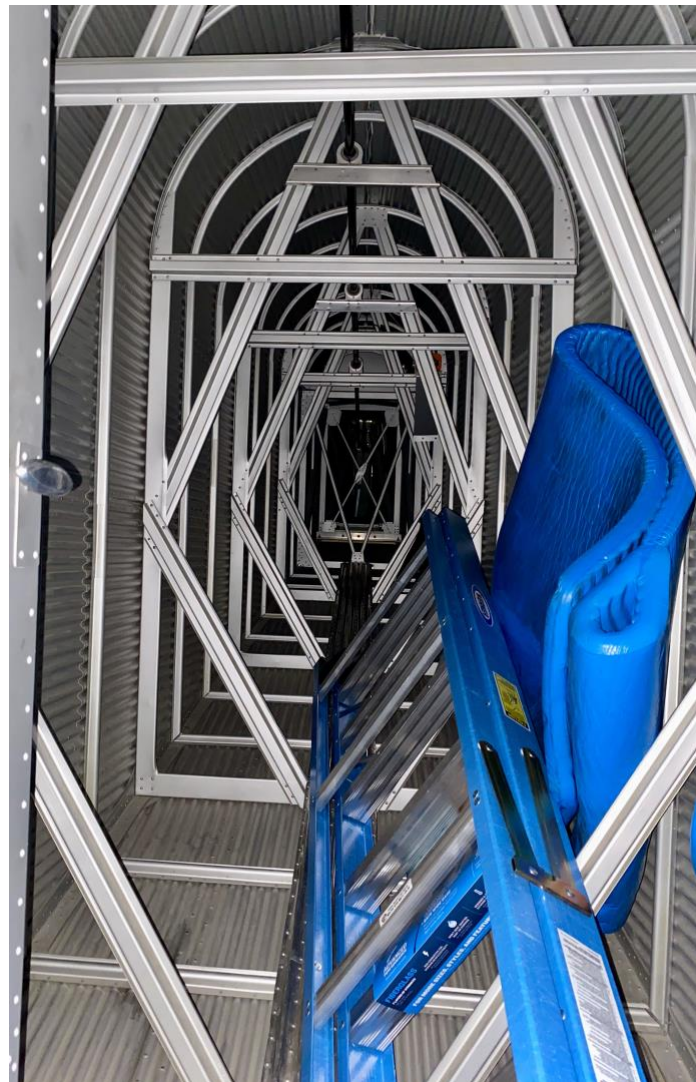
At one point Ray Hunter invited us to open a door in the back of the cabin to peer into the



OEM yokes that are OEM for a Model-T too.

photo by Chris Gordon

tailcone. If you had any lingering doubts about the Stout origins of this airplane, one look under the corrugated skin into the tail will dispel any notion this airplane was influenced by the same airplane design principles used by Donald Douglas or Dick VanGrunsven. The Tri-Motor has more in common with a bridge than it has with most other airplanes.



*The ladder and cushion don't quite look OEM.*

*photo by Chris Gordon*

So what's next for the YAM Ford? The museum has a plan to adjust the CG, and there is a popular modification to replace the Johnson Bar brakes with conventional toe brakes from an Air Tractor ag plane (yes, the weights are similar) and the intricate passenger seats need some attention from an artisan. Know anybody that dabbles in wicker baskets? Once these updates are complete, and the original NC7684 registration is renewed, you can expect to see

this beautiful and locally significant airplane on the YAM Air Adventure flight experience program for 2021.

Special thanks to Ray Hunter and the Yankee Air Museum for hosting our group!

## Ray Scholar Update

*By Mehmed Uludag*

My name is Mehmed Uludag, I am a 12th grader at Huron High School and my passion for Aerospace Engineering started when I first flew in a Cessna aircraft in San Diego, California back in 2014. The feeling of soaring like a bird shaped up my hobbies, academics and career goals.

Obtaining a pilot license has been my dream for the past several years. I have inquired about a pilot's lessons before, but financial constraints had prevented me. I was fortunate enough to be admitted for this Ray Aviation Scholarship, and I am doing my best to finish my training as soon as possible. Currently, as it pertains to my training, I am working towards my first solo. I am incredibly thankful for this opportunity to be part of an organization such as this one (I have already received a great deal of help and support from them, including my mentor: Rob Peterson) and I look forward to obtaining my pilots license!

## President's Log

*By Eric Gettel*

It seems as though lockdowns and stay-at-homes has everyone who ever thought about getting a pilot's license standing in line at the airport to get one. While it is great for general aviation, it is not so great for those of us who were accustomed to having an aircraft available without too much schedule conflict.

I am a member of, and rent Cessnas from Michigan Flyers. I have only good things to say about the club. But getting my hands on an aircraft remains difficult even as the club has enlarged its fleet to 5, 172s of various capabilities available 24 hours a day.

As recently as 2017, when the club had only 2 172s available I was able to jump on the schedule on a gorgeous, crystal-clear, mid-week September day only hours in advance and take a 172 for a last-minute 5 hour trip. It turned out to be the longest cross-country I have ever flown and the first flight for an *actual purpose* beyond training and proficiency since reactivating my PPL the year before.

My then 13-year-old daughter had allergies which we were struggling to get under control at the time. Combined with a 3-day school sponsored field trip to a Y camp in the woods near Bellaire, MI led to an irrepressible (not life-threatening) allergy episode.

Having left the office around noon, my wife, Joy, and I were faced with a 4 hour drive each way. Factoring in the usual sort of road-trip breaks, we were calculating a return around 9 or 10pm. I mentioned in a tepid sort of way that this would a golden opportunity to put an aircraft to good use. As it turns out, N1377S, a 172SP, was available setting events in motion for something a little more exotic than a road trip.

The safety-minded amongst us says, "Wait a minute. I see some danger signals in this story. Did you PAVE your way to a safe flight?" In a nutshell, yes. But the P and the E deserve deeper examination.

PAVE is an acronym for Pilot, Aircraft, environment, and External pressures. To have the best chance of having a safe flight, none of these aspects should be questionable. I had no worries about the 172 as it was well maintained and the weather could not have been more benign across the entire distance and duration of the trip. So A and V were not an issue.

On the other hand, the P, pilot immediately felt an adrenaline rise as the flight profile and terminus logistics were being sorted out. Normally before a flight I would be on the schedule for a week and would take time to visualize things like altitudes, destination airport layout, frequencies

and so on. On this day all of that framing was to occur in an hour. This was my first "impromptu" cross country. It is a different experience and not one I recall from basic flight training. My response was to keep the flight as simple as possible. As it turns out, Antrim County Airport is a straight line from Ann Arbor with no intervening



Parents to the rescue.

photo by Joy Beatty

airspace greatly simplifying route planning.

The E, External pressures were potentially of another magnitude. Rescuing my suffering daughter should be thought of as an external pressure. The truth is that dealing with the allergic episodes was fairly routine for us. We weren't panicked. Rather, we were pleased that the aircraft afforded us the ability to eliminate more than 4 hours of travel time.

In the end we departed Ann Arbor more than an hour later than we would have by car due to flight planning needs. Joy managed to coordinate with a counselor who drove my daughter the 10 miles from the camp to the airport, saving logistical issues at the destination. We then touched down in Ann Arbor before sunset and enjoyed a nice dinner at the Blue Tractor to celebrate the day.

## Keep Your Head in the Game



IMC Club is hosted by Will Minette every 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month at 7pm.

Next Meeting August 25

*One-click links to virtual meetings are sent a day or two before the event.*

## Calendar of Events

For 2020, the chapter has realigned its meetings schedule to fall consistently on the second, third, and fourth Tuesday evenings of most months.

Links for all internet meetings will be delivered via email closer to the event date.

- Oct 13 Chapter Gathering, *LIVE!* Bill Simpson's composite build-in-process, 7pm. Direction to be emailed.
- Oct 20 Business (Board) Meeting, 7pm via internet.
- Oct 27 IMC Club, 7pm via internet.
- Dec 8 Holiday Party



Disposable face masks are stored in the same drawer as the Young Eagles logbooks. Free if used for a Young Eagle or Eagle flight. Otherwise \$1 donation requested.

**President  
Eric Gettel**

**Vice President  
Beth Wichterman**

**Secretary  
Larry Sissom**

**Treasurer  
Renaud Guibert**

### Links:

EAA Hosted Builder's Logs  
[eaabuilderslog.org](http://eaabuilderslog.org)

Chapter 333 Website  
[eaa333.org](http://eaa333.org)