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Next Event

February 12th

- Electric powered vehicles—Gary Krystopik
- 5:30 Dinner



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THE TRIP OF A LIFETIME

By Oscar Zuniga

One of the reasons why the military has always favored our area for basing pilot training centers is our weather. For much of the year we enjoy warm temperatures and puffy cumulus clouds, with steady and predictable winds. Our short winters are the exception to this pattern, and the months of December through February sometimes bring extended periods of low ceilings, drizzle, fog, and cold temperatures. It is during these times when many of us sit and imagine where we might go with our airplanes if we allowed our imaginations to run free and if we had all the time and money in the world to follow those imaginations in the cockpit of an airplane. Unless I'm an anomaly among experimental builders and pilots, I'll bet that any of you can visualize a flight that is the pinnacle of your dreams or aspirations as a pilot or homebuilder. The Reno air races, the Short-Wing Piper Club fly-in, the old biplane fly-in to Bartlesville, Sun 'n' Fun, a solo Atlantic crossing, or the granddaddy of them all: the Airventure event at Oshkosh. For me, it's Brodhead, Wisconsin.

Every year during the weekend before "Oshkosh", EAA Chapter 431 hosts the Hatz Biplane and Pietenpol Fly-In at their home field in

Brodhead. It's a very low-key affair, not highly publicized, and it gives real meaning to the term "grass-roots aviation" since the single usable runway is nice lush green grass by late July. Without going into a lot of detail (you can look it up yourself by Googling EAA Chapter 431 or Brodhead Fly-In), I'll just say that this event is the Mecca for Hatz and Pietenpol enthusiasts and is the high point of the year for us. I have planned to fly to Brodhead every year since I first got interested in Air Campers, but have never made the trek. It is 1,260 statute miles from my home field of San Geronimo Airpark to Brodhead, Wisconsin. In my Air Camper, that's about 21 flight hours or about 2-1/2 days of travel each way. It represents the trip of a lifetime for me and if I'm lucky, 2011 will be the year that I am able to fly Air Camper 41CC to Brodhead and celebrate my 60th birthday not long thereafter. After all, a guy can dream, right?

Planning for such a flight in a 70 MPH open-cockpit airplane with no electrics or radio is not much different from the way it was done 50 or more years ago. Pull out a highway map or sectional chart and a ruler and make some pencil marks on a

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