



# THE STROBE

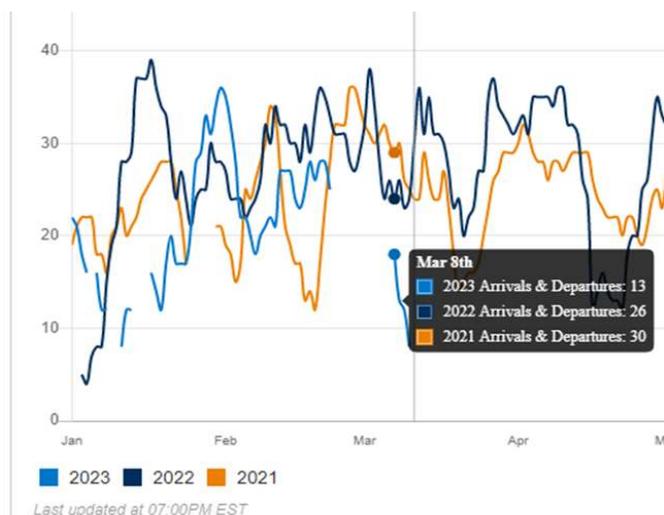
EAA Chapter 512

Placerville

March 2023

## Prez Sez...

Weather has had a significant impact on the airport and surrounding locales in 2023. The broken lines (light blue) of the Flight Aware graph show four periods of runway closure in the first 70 days of the year. The longest closure was a two-week period (Feb 23 to Mar 7) when the snow level was as low as 1000 feet. Snow accumulation on the ramp and runway was over a foot.



**EAA MEETING**  
 March 15, 2023  
 7pm  
**Annual Membership Fees Due \$20**  
**Please Pay Treasurer**

On March 1, I received a phone call from the RV storage facility in Camano which occupies the former Sierra Pacific lumber mill, about 4 miles at 060 degrees from runway 23, elevation 3,000 ft. The roof of the large shed collapsed and damaged or destroyed over 70 vehicles.

On my way to the airport, a short detour off Hwy 50, I stopped by the locked gate and asked the manager if I could see my vehicle, a MB Sprinter van parked at the east end of the 700 ft x 150 ft steel shed.



I was not allowed out of the vehicle, so I stood on the running board and shot the picture below.



I was expecting to see the roof collapsed on the top of the van. Much to my amazement, the structure collapsed from the extreme snow load and fell inward completely missing the van which was parked in the corner next to a large steel post. In the aerial photo below taken by Audrey Brand, the van was parked in the lower right corner.

The picture below shows the windshield of a large class A motor home demolished by the twisted steel beams and snow laden roof.



See below where my old sailboat and the spot where the van was parked.

You might wonder, “Can a snow load damage a hangar at Placerville?” The answer is yes, depending on the amount of snow and whether one attempts to open the hangar door. One tenant noted the roof truss depressed when the folding door was opened and could not be closed again.





## Snow, and Possible Structural Damage Due to Wing Loading

Juan Brown is an active ATP (Airline Transport Pilot) who lives in Truckee and produces aviation-related content for his YouTube channel, the “blancolorio” channel. In a previous career, Mr. Brown did structural engineering for a living, so it appears that he may be highly qualified on this subject.

Today, Tuesday, February 28, Mr. Brown observed that the aircraft tied down at Truckee airport (KTRK) may have as much as 3 feet of snow on their wings.

His S.W.A.G (Sophisticated Wild-Ass Guess) is that the weight of snow on a wing, in pounds, is equal to 1.25 times the depth of the snow. I strongly suspect that, since this isn't Utah, and we typically have to deal with “Sierra Cement” that 1.25 factor is probably much higher. But even at a conservative 1.25 lbs./inch of snow depth, that's 45 lbs. per square foot of wing surface. The wing area on a Normal Category Cessna 172 is 174 square feet. That works out to 7,830 lbs. of snow on the wings. Assuming that the aircraft has a normal Category Certification of 1.76 negative G's, plus a 150% ultimate wing failure safety margin, that's 2.64 G's. If you take the 7,830 lbs. of snow on the wings and divide that number by

the max gross weight of the aircraft (2,200 to 2,558, depending on the year), you get the equivalent of negative 3.5 G's. Why negative G's? That's because the weight (or force) of the snow is on the top of the wings, as if you were flying upside-down, or pulling an outside loop. For reference, acrobatic airplanes have load factor limits ranging from -3.0 to +6.0.

Unless Truckee airplane owners have been shoveling the snow off their wings at least once or twice during these recent four snow storms, their airplanes may have suffered some structural damage, probably with no visible evidence from the outside. AI's & A&P's at KTRK may be quite busy for awhile.

To paraphrase an often-used but FAA-discouraged sentence, “Any baloney in the above, please advise.” Thanks!

Source:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B8sE2gxwM7M>

-John Vybiral

# Builders Corner

You could call me a COVID builder and you wouldn't be wrong, but I think I would have decided to build a plane anyway. Here are the facts: I've worked from home for years, I love general aviation (though I don't fly as much as I want), I don't own a plane, I had an unused workshop on my property in rural Placerville, and I didn't yet have an outlet for my mid-life crisis. All I needed was to stumble across a Youtube video showing an average guy building a plane to realize "hey, I could do that!"

My wife, Jenny, who has no interest in becoming a pilot herself, was on board from the start. When it was time to choose a kit, it came down to a Van's RV-9A or a RV-14A (A for tricycle gear). I had settled on the -9A for cost reasons until I was inspired by Youtube once again, this time some low-G aerobatics. So, -14A it was.

I started on New Years Day, 2022, which makes it really easy to track how long I've been working on it. It's been a year. I've dutifully logged my build time in 15-minute increments, counting double for the time Jenny comes out to help. Together, we are almost at 900 hours, averaging out to a combined 2.3 hours per day. She is a terrific rivet bucker. Without her, I think the progress would be much slower and the workmanship much worse. But, she's not really into any of the other prep work, and it turns out there is a lot of prep

work, even for a kit like the -14A with its pre-formed parts and self-jigging, pre-punched, mostly final-sized rivet holes. I estimate I spend 30% of my time deburring holes and edges, 30% assembling, match-drilling, countersinking, and disassembling, 10% priming, 20% random other stuff, and 10% riveting. It's crazy to think that only 10% of the work is actually constructing the airplane. That means 90% is just prep!

The tail feathers are done. The aft fuselage (pictured) is almost done. The wings are nearly done, with just wiring and riveting the bottom skin left to do. I haven't even touched any fairings yet, and the fuselage kit is sitting on shelves. So far, the fuel tanks have taken the longest at over 130 hours. Glad to be done with those.

At the one year mark, I estimate I'm about half way through the airframe construction, which is apparently about half of the build. That means I'm still three years away from first flight. It also means I'm on track for well over 3,000 hours of build time, more than double what Van's says is the average for a first-time builder. Not sure if I'm overly meticulous or just slow, but it's no matter. I'm enjoying the process.

For now, I'm getting my flying fix in rented Cessna 172s out of Cameron Park. But, if you happen to know an ASEL owner looking to add a partner, please let me know, because I may be interested.

Eric Thomas

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# **Reminder! Hangar Clean Up Day**

*Please Join Us*

March 25<sup>th</sup> 2023 9am-2pm

Its that time of year again to start ramping up for the pancake breakfast season and outdoor dinner meetings. We need a lot of help this time since some items were postponed due to the you-know-what the last few years. Our first priority of getting the interior shipshape for food service and eating surfaces. Next priority is the outside landscaping which has been hit by many storms this winter. We will need folks with pickup trucks willing to haul yard waste out to the disposal station in Diamond Springs. We will also need folks to bring rakes for debris collection, and shovels to level off some areas and move soils away from the hangar to help stop the rain from getting inside. Also, we need to trim up bushes and trees so bring your tree trimming pole saws and clippers. Lunch will be provided. No need to sign up, we know you will be there. Thanks all.

-Tim Sullivan

## *From last months general meeting....*



Judi Gordon introduces her brother, Mike Radomsky, to the chapter before his presentation about Cold Weather Flying.

-Jim Pinkowski

# ONE LAST TIME

*Fly Fast, Turn Left*

*Reno Air Races*

**Sunday, September 17th**



As you may know by this time the Reno Air Races after 2023 will no longer be held in Reno. If you want to know why please visit the race association website. Hopefully the race association will find another home. Therefore, EAA 512 has organized a trip out to Reno **Sunday September 17<sup>th</sup>**. We will be gathering at the Park and Ride at Highway 50 and Ray Lawyer Drive and taking a 6:45 AM luxury bus to the races for the day returning the same evening. The cost will be \$50 per person which covers the roundtrip bus ride. You will be responsible for acquiring your own admission to the races. For event tickets go to **[airrace.org](http://airrace.org)**.

Please reserve your seat on the bus to our Treasurer Judy Gordon at [judieaa512@gmail.com](mailto:judieaa512@gmail.com). Judi will be at the March meeting if you wish to do so in person. **You will only have a seat on the bus when the payment is received.**

We cannot refund your money due to the limited seating and cost of the charter, however if we have a waiting list and someone replaces your spot, we can make a refund. **We will close the reservations on June 1<sup>st</sup>**. So first come first reserved.

If you have any further questions please contact Tim Sullivan at [timpvf@comcast.net](mailto:timpvf@comcast.net). We hope to see you there!



## *Help Wanted!*

Greg Stein is looking for help facilitating the IMC/VMC meetings the first Tuesday of each month.

Please contact: [greg.stein777@gmail.com](mailto:greg.stein777@gmail.com)

# 2023 Oakdale Airport Appreciation Day *"Women in Aviation"*

SUNDAY, APRIL 23<sup>RD</sup> 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

FREE ADMISSION!

FOOD, FAMILY, FUN!

FLY-INS WELCOME!

AIRPLANE RIDES FOR KIDS!



Mayor  
Cheryl Bairoso



Carol Ford  
EAA Chapter 90  
President



Beth Stanton  
Pilot Instructor



Cathy  
Stonecipher  
Business Owner and  
Instructor

RACE CARS!

ANTIQUE AND MODERN AIRCRAFT



Sponsored by:

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# GRAY EAGLES

I would like to recommend a new concept of awarding Scholarships to want-to-be pilots.

We at EAA Chapter 512 {Placerville, CA) have been doing Young Eagle Flights for over 30 years now, with great success I might add. In more recent years we have offered rides to “Bald Eagles”, as I like to call our older want to take a flight friends. We as EAA chapters have worked hard on the scholarship program for young adults, with some degree of success. I also have noticed sometimes not a 100% rate due to many reasons, be it illness, having moved away and life gets in the way scenarios.

During my past 55+ years of being a flight instructor, I have observed a number of older persons (potential pilots) showing up at different events like our pancake breakfasts, air shows, airport open house, or display days, saying they have an interest in learning to fly now that life has given them some freedoms from the prior responsibilities! We all know a few empty nesters, don't we? The kids, now out of school, off to the job market or at least the ones that have moved on!

So, to my point. We do offer them the 6-month membership in both EAA national and chapter, a ride as a Bald Eagle and invite them to a few of our activities. Occasionally we land a permanent member.

I would like to suggest Scholarships be offered, on the national level, to get them started down the path to becoming PILOTS... If we could offer enough incentive to get them to solo, I believe we could make them pilots and permanent members. I have always felt that when some one comes to me and says I want to learn to fly, they will be successful, versus if it is just given to them not so much!

Dick Wampach, ATP, CFI, AP, IA, Builder, TC

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### *Dear Reader*

The newsletter is made up ENTIRELY of content submitted by YOU. If there is something you'd like to share with the membership, *don't talk yourself out of it!* Send your stuff to this easy-to-remember email address at:

**more\_right\_rudder@yahoo.com**

It's that simple.

Sincerely,

The Editor

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## Coffee and Doughnuts

most Sundays at  
KPVF FBO  
sometime after 8:30am  
to  
sometime before lunch

