



—(Gazette Photo—Ed Schul)

IN ANY WEATHER — Being an enthusiastic flyer, Alan J. Hart of Perth has equipped his Aeronca Chief 11AC for winter use, flying from his Wood Chuck Airport, ad-

acent to his home. Hart, a member of the Johnstown chapter of the Experimental Aircraft Association, rebuilt the synthetic fabric covered plane.

Hart Earns License, Then Builds Airplane

By **JIM HINKLE**
Gazette Reporter

JOHNSTOWN — Flying was just something he wanted to do and one day he decided the time had come. So Alan J. Hart of Perth took flying lessons at Fulco Airport and got his license.

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But from there he took it one step further, knowing the high cost of an airplane, he sought an alternative — rebuilding a plane. He bought a 1939 Aeronca Chief 11AC in New York City and had it moved in pieces — to his home where he completely rebuilt the synthetic fabric covered plane.

Begun in the spring of 1977, he completed the project by last fall for what he figures cost about \$3,500.

Hart is just an example of some of the enthusiasm and interest that is part of the Johnstown Chapter of the Experimental Aircraft Association. Several others among the approximately 25 members are either building planes, building

jects going. There are already five in the works.

Lampman added that the chapter would like to have one meeting place where it could start a group project, so those members who don't have the facilities or time can actually work on a plane.

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On important activity the chapter is becoming widely known for is its acquiring the remains of a one-of-a-kind airplane for the EAA museum in Wisconsin. The plane, a Laird Sesquiwing, looks like a biplane, Lampman said, noting that the bottom wing is only half of the top span. The enclosed cabin was capable of flying 200 m.p.h.

The chapter president explained that it was designed by Matty Laird, who is still living, for a manufacturer. It was going through flight testing when the manufacturer died. The plane was given to RPI. Over the years, the college used parts of it for stress analysis. All that is left is one land-

gliders, rebuilding or have designs for such a project.

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This latest EAA chapter is just over a year old, according to Gary Lampman, president. There was once another chapter but it moved to Albany. The local chapter has persons attending meetings at Fulton-Montgomery Community College from Averill Park, Speculator and Richmondville.

Lampman said that in all, its members are part of the 150,000 international parent organization.

Last year, he said, the club worked on providing general information such as what is available and what other organizations are doing. But this year, the emphasis has been on "how to," such as welding or foam-fiberglass structures. Next year it is hoped that more members will have some proj-

ing gear, a wing and control wheel.

The chapter heard about the plane through the "grapevine," Lampman reported. The museum is interested in acquiring the pieces. It seems there are Florida chapters interested in building this type of aircraft.

All the local chapter has to do is swap parts with the college.

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The parent organization was born about 25 years ago in the basement of a Milwaukee home by air show and professional pilots. It was a fun thing to design airplanes out of their heads, designs that were never done before.

That part of it makes it interesting for many of the members, designing and building their own aircraft — something that may not be a mass production airplane and something that may not cost \$14,000 like a new plane, it was reported.

For those persons who have a specialized interest in aviation, there are divisions, such as the International Aerobatic Club, The Warbirds of America and Antique-classic.

Each year, there is the world's largest aviation convention in Oshkosh, Wis., which draws more than a 1,000 aircraft and more than 100,000 persons.

Hart said he would like to fly his plane to the convention this summer. If he does, he will be leaving from his 1,800-foot turf runway (Wood Chuck Airport) adjacent to his home.