

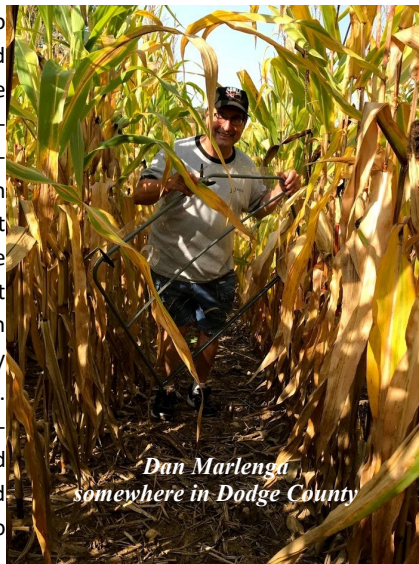
## Flying 2020



On the morning of Sept 23rd, the next big adventure was underway. Paul's Avid Flyer was down with mechanical issues so I stopped at Norrie Brook to pick him up. We flew to Fond du Lac County Airport where Paul would fly his son Brandon's Kitfox for today's stamping trip. We met Larry Gordon at Fond du Lac and headed out for the day. At about 9 am we departed for our first stop at Jana Airport in Edgerton WI. En route to Jana I noticed that my pilot side door was vibrating. Upon closer inspection, I discovered that the top forward hinge pin had pulled out allowing the door to bounce.

I reached up to put the pin back into the hinge, but couldn't get it to line up, the door had dropped down slightly out of place. Now flying at 3000 feet and 90 mph, I reached down with my right hand to lift on the door while I guided the pin back in place with my left hand. In an instant the door was gone!! The door caught the windstream and it was ripped right off the airplane. Stunned for a couple of seconds, I called out to Paul and Larry about my situation. I turned my plane around to see if I could spot the door. Paul and I were pretty close so he also

turned and was able to spot my all plastic door. Paul could see it flipping over in the sunlight as it descended to the ground. He watched as the door landed in a corn field somewhere southwest of the Dodge County Airport in Juneau. We decided to land at Juneau and try to find the lost door. Paul had taken mental notes and also marked the site on his GPS.



*Dan Marlena  
somewhere in Dodge County*

We were able to borrow the airport courtesy car for our quest to find the missing door. Paul guided us in the general direction of the corn field. Luckily we picked the correct road and Paul recognized the farm where the door had landed. We pulled in to the farm and asked permission to go looking in the corn field. The location of the drop was about a half mile off the road, so we drove back to the field to begin our search. Armed with Paul's details, we walked to the south end of the corn field. Paul, Larry and myself lined up about 3 rows apart from the edge of the

field and started down the rows of corn. Within a couple minutes Paul spotted the missing door. We collected the undamaged door, complete with hinge pins still in the door frame. We returned to the airport and I reinstalled the door. This little side trip took only about 90 minutes and we were again ready to resume our trip. Larry Gordon coined this 90 minute pause as, "an experience of unexpected happenings, with unlikely endings"!

Larry side tracked to other airports that he needed for his stamp collection, while Paul and I flew to Jana airport. Two weeks later I flew this same route with Lyle and Mary Baner, so I will combine information on both trips. Jana was a stamp -n- go with no one around, so off to the Southern Wisconsin Regional Airport in Janesville. The terminal building is really nice so on this stop we had breakfast at the restaurant. We left Janesville and headed south to Beloit Airport where the sign informed us we had just arrived at the friendliest airport in Wisconsin. We got our passport stamp without seeing anyone, so we could not gauge the claim of friendliest airport?

Broadhead airport was our next stop, where we had made arrangements to tour the Kelch Aviation Museum. This museum has some very old airplanes from Kelch's private collection. They also have engine displays, several other donated planes,

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Flying 2020

*(Continued from page 1)*

and aviation books. We took on fuel and departed for Monroe Municipal airport. After a stamp from Monroe it was off to Albany. The stamp at Albany was very deteriorated from sun exposure but it still counts.

On both trips we were able to talk to some of the local pilots that call this airport home. On our September trip, Paul and I flew to Portage where we visited with the airport manager and stopped by a local watering hole for some supper before flying for home. 6.4 hours on the Hobbs today with the memories of the missing door fresh on our minds.

On the second trip I flew home from Albany while Lyle and Mary continued to Flying Feathers airport in Chilton WI. Just like Paul and I, they were able to get a tour of Dean's Ag Spraying operation. Lyle and Mary also stopped for a stamp at Clinton-



ville. On their way home to Merrill, they did a fly-by at Norrie Brook Airstrip and a wave to Paul and Sue. While on my way home from Albany I hit some headwinds and recorded 6.7 hours on the Hobbs. We all have only a few stamps left to complete the passport book!

Humbly Submitted,  
Dan Marlenga

***This article originally published in July 2021 NCWLF Newsletter.***