THE GRAPEVINE

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There is a very fine line between "hobby" and "mental illness."

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MEETING AND PROGRAM

Our August meeting will take place at 7:30 P.M. on the 4th of August in the Terminal Building at the Livermore Airport. Tentatively, we're scheduled to have a presentation by C.J. Stevens, who is the Chief Test Pilot for the CAFE Foundation, located in Santa Rosa, CA. Sponsored and funded by the EAA, this organization has spent years studying the many "little" things which can lead to greater efficiency for General Aviation aircraft.

MINUTES: GENERAL MEETING EAA CHAPTER 663, 7/7/05, 7:30 PM, LVK TERMINAL BUILDING

Chapter president Ralph Cloud called the meeting to order.

Seven guests introduced themselves.

Ralph congratulated Leland Collins on the first flight of his RV-9A. Flight advisor Barry Weber did the first flight; the plane flew hands off. Leland has since flow it and is working through some teething problems with the radio. Leland's is the first RV-9 in the chapter to fly.

The minutes for the June meeting were approved as printed in "The Grapevine". Thanks to John Meyer for writing up the June general meeting.

Business: Ralph reported good attendance at the 4th of July barbecue, the next will be October 8th.

Election of new chapter officers is coming in Oct. Ralph requested volunteers for a nominating committee. There were no takers. PLEASE CONSIDER PLACING YOUR SELF IN NOMINATION FOR ONE OF THE CHAPTER OFFICES.

Eric Helms reported that 23 Young Eagles were flown at the June rally, and requested volunteers for the July 16th rally.

Ralph requested some pilots from the chapter show up at the July 11th City Council Meeting. The matter of funding the noise monitoring around the airport will be on the agenda. If it is decided that the airport pays for this, . . . we pay for it with higher rents.

Announcements: Next board meeting will be July 21st at Ralph's place. Airport Open House is coming on September 24th.

Break and Program: Bill Jepson introduced Bill Randolph. Bill is a gentleman who has been flying since 1946. He decided a couple years ago he wanted to fly an airplane around the world. He built an airplane, a RV -8, and did it! He gave a great presentation of his adventure. The scariest flight was from Trinidad to Belem, Brazil, bad thunderstorms, turbulence and heavy rain. The best place was either Fortaleza Brazil or New

Caledonia, great people (all pilots). The worst country to fly over was India, by far.

This program will be long remembered by those lucky enough to attend. Thank you Bill.

Meeting adjourned for pie.

MINUTES: BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, 7/ 21/05, 7:30 PM, PALPH's PLACE.

Members with initials DaCl, RaCl, Bi Je, JoMe, BoFa, and BrCr were present.

Business: Ralph mentioned the next barbecue will be October 8th.

Ralph has tried to get someone to act as a nominating committee for the October chapter elections, so far without success. Bob Buckthal (are you reading this?).

Ralph mentioned the annual dinner. The Alamo women's club is the lead venue. Ralph mentioned Bill Randolph (above) or Paul Rosalus who with his wife has flown their RV-6 to all states except Hawaii as possible speakers for the occasion.

Bob Farnam reported the Tandem Wing Fly in is set for August 20

Bill Jepson reported he had a lead on a speaker for the August meeting. Ah.. ah.. ah..

Joe Montemoreno has offered to host a board of directors meeting, to include viewing his RV-6 project.

Announcements: Next meeting will be August 4th. The Airport Open House fund raising spaghetti feed will be July 23.

Meeting adjourned for pie.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce Cruikshank Secretary.

CHECKED OUT, BUT CLUELESS

Alone in their 50-seat commercial jet, the two young pilots decided to see what their Bombardier passenger jet could do.

According to documents released Monday by the National Transportation Safety Board, they climbed so fast that they were pushed down into their seats with 2.3 times the normal force of gravity, zooming toward 41,000 feet, the limit of their Bombardier CRJ 200.

"Ooh, look at that," said the second-in-command, Peter R. Cesarz, 23, apparently referring to cockpit readings. "Pretty cool."

"Man, we can DO it," said the captain, Jesse Rhodes, 31. "Forty-one it," he said, referring to the maximum altitude.

A few minutes later, though, both engines were dead, and the pilots were struggling to glide to an emergency landing at an airport in Jefferson City, Mo. " We're going to hit houses, dude," one of them said.

The plane crashed two and a half miles from the runway, missing the houses but killing the pilots.

On Monday, the safety board opened three days of hearings into the crash, which occurred last Oct. 14 on a night flight from Little Rock, Ark., to Minneapolis, to reposition the plane for the next day's schedule.

Among the questions at issue is whether the plane's two engines, which are designed to be capable of restarting in flight, may have seized up, resisting four efforts to get them running. Another is whether the airline, Pinnacle Airlines, which is rapidly growing and moving young pilots from turboprops into jets, provided appropriate training.

Some investigators say the pilots flew the plane far harder than an airline would fly with passengers on board, and in testimony on Monday, Terry Mefford, Pinnacle's chief pilot, agreed.

"If there's people in the airplane," he said, "you can count that the crew members are pretty much going by the book."

Mr. Mefford also said that since the accident, he had heard talk of a "410 club," whose members had flown the Bombardier to Flight Level 410, or 41,000 feet. Investigators for the safety board ap-

parently heard similar talk. "Investigators formed the impression," a board report said, "that there was a sense of allure to some pilots to cruise at FL 410 just to say they had ' been there and done that.' "

The two pilots had set the autopilot to take the plane to its 41,000-foot limit, but instead of specifying the speed at which it should fly while climbing, they specified the rate of climb. When the jet reached the assigned altitude, it was flying relatively slowly.

The transcript of their conversation as captured by the cockpit voice recorder suggests exhilaration. An air traffic controller with jurisdiction over the flight asked at one point, " 3701, are you an RJ-200?"

"That's affirmative," one of the pilots replied.

"I've never seen you guys up at 41 there," she said.

Then there was laughter in the cockpit.

"Yeah, we're actually . . a . . there's ah . . we don't have any passengers on board . . so we decided to have a little fun and come on up here," one of the pilots answered.

In the thin air, though, the engines had less thrust, and the plane slowed further. The nose pitched up as the autopilot tried to keep it at the assigned altitude. And then an automatic system began warning that the plane was approaching a "stall," in which there is too little lift to maintain flight.

"Dude, it's losing it," one pilot said, using an expletive.

" Yeah," the other said.

But as an automatic system tried to push the nose down, to gain speed and prevent the stall, the pilots - for reasons that are unclear - overrode the system.

So the plane did stall. And the turbulent air flowing off the wings entered the engines, shutting them down.

"We don't have any engines," one of the pilots said. "You got to be kidding me."

At that point, the safety board says, the plane was within gliding range of five suitable airports.

Yet the pilots did not tell the controller the full extent of their problem, reporting that they had lost one engine, not both, and it was not until 14 minutes later that one said: " We need direct to any airport. We have a double engine failure."

The airline has denounced the pilots: "It's beyond belief that a professional air crew would act in that manner," said Thomas Palmer, former manager of Pinnacle's training program for that model of jet. He said the crew had evidently disregarded " their training and common sense airmanship."

But the ALPA says Pinnacle's safety program had crucial gaps, including lack of training for high altitudes. It also maintains that the engines suffered "core lock," in which engines running at high thrust are shut down suddenly and, when the parts cool at different rates, some rotating components bind up.

General Electric, which built the engines, says the engines did not seize up.

To be certified by the Federal Aviation Administration, engines must be capable of restarting in flight. One issue that the safety board will have to resolve is whether the engines on this plane met that rule.

A STROKE OF BAD LUCK

Sometimes symptoms of a stroke are difficult to identify. Unfortunately, the lack of awareness spells disaster. The stroke victim may suffer brain damage when people nearby fail to recognize the symptoms of a stroke. Now doctors say a bystander can recognize a stroke by asking three simple questions:

*Ask the individual to **SMILE.**

*Ask him or her to **RAISE BOTH ARMS**.

*Ask the person to **SPEAK A SIMPLE SENTENCE.**

If he or she has trouble with any of these tasks, call 9-1-1 immediately and describe the symptoms to the dispatcher.

After discovering that a group of non medical volunteers could identify facial weakness, arm weakness and speech problems, researchers urged the general public to learn the three questions. They presented their conclusions at the American Stroke Association's annual meeting last February.

Widespread use of this test could result in prompt diagnosis and treatment of the stroke and prevent brain damage.

E-MAG/P-MAG PROBLEMS

Marc Zeitlin

Three or four weeks ago, after getting what was supposed to be to be my final P-Mag EI system and installing it, I did a short test flight. It seemed to act OK - no problems, but within a couple of flights it was acting up, with major "missing" problems on just about every flight at high power/MP/RPM levels, even when cold. I was just about to throw in the towel, and had written an e-mail to Emagair asking for my money back, when I got a phone call from them.

Tom, the main technical guy there, explained that they had worked all weekend trying to reproduce my problem, and **had finally figured out what was going on.** To make a long story barely a bit shorter, the problem was in the firmware, which had a bug that would change the timing substantially when any quick electrical voltage glitch appeared on the bus. They said that they had fixed it and would appreciate if I would try it out - they said it had fixed the same "missing" problems with a couple of other units.

I said "OK - one last try". I sent them the Emag I had removed a few weeks back for an update, and continued to fly on occasion with the P-Mag (with the "miss"). A week or two ago I received it back, installed it, and went on a short test flight. No problems (but we've heard THAT story before). I sent the P-Mag back for update, and told them that I'd pick it up from them at OSH. I figured that the check ride flight last weekend and the flight to OSH on Sunday would be the real tests, and I think they were.

Doing four takeoffs in hot, high power, heavy conditions on Saturday, and then another three on Sunday, and one more on Monday, I had NO "missing", even after long engine runs, high temps, high MP's, high RPM's - all conditions that would have led to a "miss" previously. It SEEMS as though the firmware update has finally cured the problems that I've been having. I am guardedly optimistic, but optimistic just the same.

I REALLY like these devices, and believe that they've got a great system if the bugs are truly gone (or even close to it). I will be picking up my final updated P-Mag tomorrow, and will probably wait until I get home to install it and test it out, but if the firmware change in the E-Mag is any indication (and they use exactly the same firmware), it should be good to go also.

GLASS OVERCAST CLOUDS AIRVENTURE SKY

By Randy Dufault

Ten years ago a group of Burt Rutan-designed airplane owners and builders wanted to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Rutan's first composite airplane design, the VariEze. They thought a mass arrival at AirVenture would be a fitting tribute and so the first Glass Overcast was born.

As the 30th anniversary was approaching in 2005, several members of the canard airplane community believed it would be a great idea to recreate the 20th anniversary flight.

Frank Pullano, an active member of the community and producer of a number of videos about experimental aviation, took on the huge challenge of putting together a mass arrival into EAA AirVenture Oshkosh 2005.

"We started planning this four months ago," Pullano said. "I was a pretty well known guy in the community with a lot of flight lead experience, so I was asked, and honored, to take the lead."

Through the website, a broadly distributed canard airplane newsletter and several e-mail lists, over 2,000 canard owners and builders were notified about the effort. Ninety planes registered, but late schedule changes, weather and mechanical difficulties limited the final group to33.

The airplanes gathered at the Fond du Lac airport over the last few days and departed at 11:45 a.m. Monday for the short-and there was a tailwind-7-minute flight to Oshkosh.

The event was open to any Rutan-designed or derivative composite airplane. The final group included VariEzes, Long-EZs, Velocities, Cozys, Defiants, an SQ2000, a Quickie Q200 and a Stagger EZ.

All the planes arrived at EAA AirVenture just as Pullano had planned. "They were absolutely perfect," he said. "Everyone did exactly what they were supposed to do. I was a bit concerned since we had a south departure out of Fond du Lac and we had to land here with a tailwind, but they're all here and they're all down safely."

Even though only 33 airplanes arrived as part of the mass arrival, Pullano is very pleased with the overall canard turnout for this year's convention. He was pretty certain all the communication about the mass arrival helped other owners decide to come.

The Glass Overcast participants, as well as other composite canard airplanes that arrived here individually, are parked on the flight line just north of
AeroShell Square.

When asked whether it will be 10 years before the next Glass Overcast arrival into AirVenture Pullano said, "[The flight] went very well. It really did. I think that all the folks that were afraid of it had their minds changed. I think we may do it again next year, if the interest is there. With one very successful one under our belt, it may just happen."

Photo by Bob Farnam

Whistling Death strafing Grass Valley

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