



THE GRAPEVINE



EAA CHAPTER 663 Livermore, California

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

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THE APRIL MEETING

Our April meeting will take place at 7:30 P.M. on the 6th of April in the Terminal Building at the Livermore Airport. Our program will be a viewing of the movie 16 Right, the story of the Van Nuys Airport.

MINUTES: GENERAL MEETING EAA CHAPTER 663, 03/02/06, 7:30 PM, TERMINAL BUILDING LVK.

Chapter president Bob Farnam called the meeting to order.

We had three guests present for our April meeting, Mike Ikenberger, Jack Marling, and Jeff Timms.

The February minutes in the "The Grapevine" were approved as published.

Treasurer Bill Bunce reported \$4,533 in chapter funds.

New Business: Bob Farnam asked for a show of hands of preference for a January dinner meeting location. The 2005 location, Livermore Veterans hall or the 2004 location, the Alamo women's club. The majority of hands chose the Alamo women's club.

Ralph Cloud asked chapter members to our web site, EAA663@FLASH.NET to update your personal information.

Brad Olsen spoke of various ideas and topics for future chapter meetings.

Bob Farnam spoke about updating the chapter photo album.

John Meyer presented a plastic flying pig to Bob Buckthal; when you see Bob, ask to see his pig fly.

During the break **Jeff Rutledge** took digital photos of all the chapter members present at the meeting for the chapter photo album.

Program: Bob Cowan gave a slide show presentation on building his TMX IO-360 engine at Mattituck Engines. Bob showed a series of photos starting from a bare crankshaft on a stand, to a complete engine in gleaming red and gold paint running on a test stand. Bob answered several questions from chapter members and added that he was very impressed with the quality of his new engine.

Meeting adjourned for **pie** at 9:00

MINUTES: BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, 03/16/06 7:30 PM, BOB FARNAM'S HOUSE.

Present for the meeting, Bob Farnam, Brad Olsen,

Bill Bunce, Scott Alair, Ralph Cloud, Gordon Jones, John Meyer, Harry Crosby, and Bruce Cruikshank.

Treasurer Bill Bunce reported \$4,769.86 in chapter funds.

Gordon Jones is researching information on an LCD projector for chapter use.

Brad Olsen reported on facilities at the Robert Livermore center for the January 2007 dinner meeting. It was decided to reserve a room there for the dinner.

Chapter Barbecue dates for 2007 are: May 20th, June 17th, July 15th, and September 23rd. Coals will be hot at 4:00 pm. Bring your own entree and a side dish to share, if you want a place to sit it would be helpful to bring a chair.

Ralph Cloud said for greater reliability of the chapter web site, we may change the host of the site.

Next chapter meeting April 6th, next board meeting April 20th.

Meeting adjourned for **pie** at 9:00.

Life's short, fly fast.,..Scott Alair, Secretary.

FROM THE CHAPTER 376 NEWS LETTER

Jim's account of the crash: "I told him (the seller) to spare no expense on the annual, I wanted a very safe airplane, that was the most important thing"

Jim and Erik traveled to Tennessee to pick up the airplane. The seller arrived to pick them up in an old ambulance. Erik rode in the back and Jim in the front. Jim asked to be taken to see the airplane that night. They went to the Wheeler Express airplane. It looked very good except for a worn tire. It was unpainted and without an interior, but had about 249 hours on a brand new engine.

The following day another ride in the ambulance took them back to fly the plane. The owner was reluctant to fly the plane. He wanted a test pilot to fly the plane. But Jim reminded him that with 249 hours of flying the plane no one else was more

qualified to do a demonstration flight. So he agreed. The plane was well tuned and flew very nicely, hands off. All of the systems were tested, auto pilot, etc. Jim and Erik talked it over. It had flown 249 hours and it seemed safe to assume that it would be okay to fly another 11 hours back to Visalia where Lycon would go over the engine. The owner told him that one time his knee had hit the fuel pump switch and he had been unable to restart the engine, but this happened on landing, and he made a dead stick landing at the airport.

After a lot of discussion, they paid the owner and took off for Meridian. Along the way they tried all the cruise settings, 22 squared, 23 squared, 24, 25. The plane flew very nicely. They felt very confident about the aircraft. They landed and added fuel. They took off and after a while experienced some problems with the autopilot and GPS. They thought the problem might be heat so they turned off all the power and headed to Tyler, Texas, which had a 5000 foot runway.

Approaching Tyler, they turned on the power and contacted the tower About four miles out at 4000 feet, Jim pulled back on the throttle to reduce the power a little, and the engine died. The 4-bladed prop was wind milling, when Erik told Jim that they were below the VASI. Jim answered that they did not have any power. Erik reached down and changed the tanks, and followed the instructions to use low boost. The engine caught again, and the plane leveled off, perhaps climbed a bit, but then died again. At this point, Jim knew they were going in. The plane was sinking like a rock, part of that due to the drag caused by the 4-bladed prop. The field he had picked was just a pipe dream, even in the best situation. There were trees everywhere. The airport was carved out of trees. They were all cottonwoods with a diameter of 8 to 12 inches. Jim saw one tree which was bigger. He knew that if they stalled the airplane, it's all over. The 0-550 engine was heavy. One option was to do nothing and hope for the best, the other was to fly the airplane until the very last second. His plan was to hit the big tree and take off the left wing, and add full left rudder upon impact. By doing that, his hope was to put the plane into a spin and helicopter on down. Most of the fuel was in that wing. When he hit the tree it spun them sideways. Jim's shoulder harness dug into his shoulder and tore his muscles away from the bones. Erik's position was just the opposite. He

was pulled away from the harness and into the side of the airplane. Jim thinks that is why Erik was able to avoid serious injuries. Jim's left foot was planted firmly on the rudder, which is why he thinks his leg was broken. At this point Jim was knocked unconscious. His last thought was that Erik would not get back into position in time before the crash. After the crash, Jim still doesn't know how Erik was able to pull Jim from the plane. After he did so, Erik went out into the open field and contacted the tower on his handheld radio. The tower put Erik in contact with a chase plane which directed the searchers to their location. The chase plane was flown by a student pilot who forwarded the information to the fire truck, ambulance and other vehicles. Jim has no recollection of any thing that happened at this point. When he woke up in the hospital, the first thing he saw was Erik leaning over him with that big Norwegian smile, and he felt like he won the Power Ball Lottery. At that point he was so happy that he couldn't hold his happiness in, knowing that Erik was okay. Jim was very impressed with the people and the hospital. Since then he was told by his doctor that his leg had been set by the "Varsity Team" using a metal brace and titanium screws. Because of his concussion, the hospital kept him 48 hours. When released, they went to a restaurant, and when Jim went to pay the bill he was told that a couple, having learned about the crash, had already paid it. And it was a pretty nice dinner.

They arrived home on Sunday. On the following Saturday, with Jim's leg in a cast, he went out on a Dawn Patrol mission, flying with Phil Moradian in his RV-6. Jim said that it was like falling from a horse, you get back on and ride. Meanwhile he and Erik have been on the phone with the NTSB and the FAA, back and forth. When they interviewed Erik, he was able to document just about every move they had made in the air. Erik had the times that they changed fuel. Every document necessary was in the plane. All the manuals, everything. In fact they told them that of all the crashes they had ever investigated, he had set the bar to a new level.

The NTSB investigator couldn't believe they had survived this crash. This same NTSB investigator is building an RV-8. Before they learned that no rule had been violated, they were pretty standoffish. But afterwards they became quite friendly.

The NTSB gentleman told him that the FAA had called the seller and wanted to ask some questions about the plane. His comment was that it was sold "as is and where is" and then hung up on the FAA. As soon as the mechanic hired by the FAA at Tyler, Texas, pulled the fuel filter, they took it from him and dropped it into an envelope. From what he saw it was clogged with fiberglass fibers. There was also a turquoise color to the filter. His comment was that it looked like the filter had never been changed. The NTSB called Jim to ask for a specific date that the annual had been done. He answered that he had authorized the seller to have it done two months before.

The NTSB person thought that unusual because the annual had not been signed off until two hours before Jim and Erik had departed for Fresno, CA

AND ANOTHER CRASH, ONE AT OSHKOSH The Pilot's Report

by: Ross Mickey

I just wanted to touch base with you all, since I, unfortunately, am the pilot of the "plane that crashed at Oshkosh." I first want to thank Nels and the other extraordinary "ordinary" folks who helped me get out of my plane. As I hung there up-side-down, trying to break the shards of canopy out of my way, I knew that I would have to imitate a badger and dig my way out if they had not lifted the tail. The accounts given by Nels and Randy pretty much say it all. Since I am writing, however, I may as well emphasize some stuff and embellish the story.

First, this accident MIGHT have been avoidable if I had been on a steeper glide path. I say "might" because I don't know if I would of still have been rocked to the point of having my wing touch even then. The difference would be that the wing would have hit the pavement instead of the dirt. The only other way I could have avoided it would have been to go around after the Cherokee slipped in front of me on short final. This is where Nels advice is right on. I did have about 15-30 seconds to make a decision to go around after the Cherokee butted in and I decided to forge on. Now, I would make a different decision. Here is the whole story.

After covering 1500 nm from Eugene, Oregon to Oshkosh in 9 flight hours and 10.5 total hours (don't you love these planes!!!), I entered a holding pattern over the two lakes south of Ripon with 15-30 other planes. We were holding because the airport was closed due to the ground being so soggy that they could not get the planes that had already arrived off the runway and taxiways. The controller at Fiske assured us we would be able to get in and, as I had made an extra fuel stop to ensure I had enough just for this type of occurrence, I slogged around the lakes for over an hour. Interestingly enough, I encountered slight turbulence from the airplane I was following about 4 times. Since I was at 1800 feet, this was a non-event but quicker minds than mine might have picked up on these lessons. I, sadly, did not.

When the airport reopened, I followed my lead another couple of times around the lake until we were cleared to Fiske from Ripon. The plane in front of me broke off when a large high wing swooped down in front of him. That meant I was following the nut so I gave him lots of room. At Fiske, he was vectored to Runway 36 and I was told to follow a "V" tail to 9.

Feeling relieved, I spaced myself a comfortable distance behind the "V" tail and turned a long final. As we got closer, I noticed a Cherokee high and to my right. I kept him in sight as he was flying towards Runway 9 also. From the controller chatter, I surmised that he had aborted his landing and was waiting to get sequenced in. On a short final, the controller did sequence him in front of me probably because I had so much cushion between me and the "V" tail.

The controller then told me to "put it on the numbers" a few times and as I looked ahead, there were at least 4 planes on the runway in front of me. I slowed as much as I could, staying well away from stall but this did end up shallowing my final approach. I have made many shallow approaches before so my last good thought was that the landing was going to be a squeaker. The number 9 was right in line and life was good.

The next 15 seconds went by very fast and anything I did was pure reaction. The left wing dipped violently, I shoved the stick right, which caused my left aileron to deflect downward. This down aileron was the first thing to hit. I then saw my

prop curl and stop at 10 o'clock. My right wing tip touched briefly. I was rolling towards the left side of the runway and if the conditions had been dryer would have probably rolled out there and stopped. Since the ground was so soggy, my nose gear stuck in the mud and I slowly went head over heels.

My only injury was a bruised sternum from the intense pressure of the seat belts. As Randy said, the attach point for my crotch strap was a bolt through two pieces of aluminum angle. These two pieces of angle were bent about 3/8th of an inch. I believe what saved me was my 5 point Hooker Harness and Van's design. The roll bar will have to be replaced but it only deflected down about 1 inch.

I will get enough insurance money to rebuild and I am physically ok. Two very important matters. The third, my emotional state, will take sometime. It will take me a while to change from being a flyer to a builder and every time I look at my airplane parts, my heart breaks.

The disassembly and loading of the plane was only possible because Wally Anderson and his four house mates spent two mornings and two evenings of their Airventure experience doing the work I could not do. Steve Meyer of Meyer's Aviation was also invaluable in assisting us.

Again, a huge thanks to all the people who helped me through this mess. I am very grateful to them and to God for being where I am today.

RE: AND ANOTHER CRASH AT OSHKOSH? EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT

by Nels Hanson <pa201950@yahoo.com>

I was sitting in my RV-6 in the grass at the approach end of "9" at OSH with my engine off waiting for my chance to get out of there last Sat. evening. I listened and watched planes coming in on 9 for about 5 minutes. The tower was telling this particular RV to "land on the numbers". He mentioned this 2-3 times. It was busy and the traffic was heavy. I thought this RV was coming in a little low and slow so I watched the whole thing unfold. I feel (personal opinion only) that this gentleman started to let the tower "fly" his airplane. The plane was approx. 15-20 ft. high above the runway when the left wing dropped quickly and

struck the runway. The plane came down on it's gear and left wing. The nose wheel quickly collapsed and the plane started skidding down Runway 9 at an angle. It slid off the runway and plowed sod for about 30-40 ft. before the combination of the nose wheel and propeller dug in the sod. The plane flipped over on it's back very slowly. It did not "cartwheel". The pilot was trapped in the plane, that was easy to tell the way it lay. I radioed the tower to send the EMT's and crash squad. I unbuckled and climbed out of my plane.

I was on the south side of the runway and the crashed RV was on the north side. I probably should not have done what I did next but I did it anyway. I looked at the incoming planes and saw them climbing. Assuming the tower had told them to go around I sprinted across the runway toward the RV. I did not want to see this plane go up in flames with someone inside. About the time I got to the plane a couple of other guys got there too. Don't know where they came from. We dove under the wing to see how many people were inside. The pilot (only passenger) was conscious and alert. About 3-4 of us lifted the tail and wing while two other guys pulled the pilot out of the plane and moved him 30-40ft. away. The pilot sat up and had a couple of cuts and bruises but was very aware. I was so happy to see that he wasn't seriously injured. About that time the "officials" got there and hurried us out of there.

I was glad to get back to my plane. Of course, now the runway was closed and I had to taxi back to 18 to takeoff. Again, just my opinion, but here's the lesson: You are the pilot of your plane. You need to fly it and not let the business of OSH get into your head. I feel the intensity of the close arrivals and intensity of the controller's voice had a very large part to play in this accident. However, we MUST remember to keep flying the plane.

This could have been a monumental tragedy if fire had broken out. I had already made my mind up as I ran across the runway to take some burns if it came to that. The other guys who showed up never hesitated for an instance before diving down to the broken cockpit to get that guy out of there ASAP. I have no idea who they were, but I want to thank them for being there.

So, there it is, a very close-up eyewitness account

from someone who flies an RV and saw the whole thing unfold. I'm just glad it turned out the way it did.

RE: AND ANOTHER CRASH AT OSHKOSH?

Randy Lervold <randy@romeolima.com>

I spoke with Ross Mickey directly at a restaurant on Wednesday night in OSH and got the whole story. Here's the scoop as he relayed it to us at dinner: He was on short final for 27 after holding for about an hour over the lake. Once they started landing again they stuffed a Cherokee in front of him on short final. Spacing was too tight and speeds were slow. I forget the exact altitude, but he got hit with some sort of down draft or **wake turbulence** at maybe 50-100' and pan caked in just short of the runway, then rolled up onto the runway but veered to the left. When he went off the left edge into the very soggy grass (from all the rain) the nose wheel caught and he flipped over instantly. He has an AOA Pro and said it never screamed at him ("angle, angle, push") which is how he knew it was wake turbulence and not a stall. He was taken to the hospital with a bruised sternum and other bruises and released a day or two later.

He was insured and has already met with the adjusters. The plane will likely be totaled and he plans to buy the salvage back and rebuild it. He credits his Hooker harness with preventing serious injury and especially the fact that he had a crotch strap (5-point harness). The anchor for the crotch strap was seriously deformed.

Wally Anderson, also from Eugene, flew back to help him disassemble the plane and get it back here. He'll likely drop the engine off at Bart Lalonde's shop on the drive back to Oregon from OSH. Yes, the prop struck, in fact he said he could see the bent tips still rotating in front of him as he rolled up onto the runway before he tipped over. Once he gets back, perhaps he can add some detail, but due to the drive back, don't expect that for a few days. The good news is that Ross is just fine, and also was insured, whew! I have never understood why Van's doesn't design a crotch strap anchor into ALL the models. If you don't have one please consider adding it.

BEEN A ROUGH DAY, BUNKIE?

Just in case you are having a rough day, here is a Stress Management Technique recommended in all the latest psychological texts. The funny thing is that it works.

1. Picture yourself near a stream.
2. Birds are softly chirping in the cool mountain air.
3. No one knows your secret place.

4. You are in total seclusion from the hectic pace of the world.
5. The soothing sound of a gentle waterfall fills the air with a cascade of serenity.
6. The water is crystal clear.
7. You can easily make out the face of the hated person you are holding underwater.
8. See, you're smiling already.



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