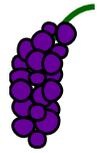




# THE GRAPEVINE



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

EAA Chapter 663 Livermore, California

Vol. XXVII, No. 12, December, 2008

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## December Meeting And Program

Our December meeting will take place at 7:30 P.M. on the 4th of November in the Terminal Building at the Livermore Airport. Our program for the night will consist of a short business meeting followed by a tour of John Youngblood's Velocity project, in hanger 305 on the South East side. We will take care of chapter business first at 7:30, and then drive to John's hanger about 8 pm. John's Velocity story started in 1988 when he toured the factory in Sebastian, Florida. At that time, the Velocity was smaller and it was hard to get in and out of the airplane. This lead to the current gull wing door design change, but John still found the airplane on the small side. When the XL was introduced, the airplane was lighter and longer. John had no more excuses, so he bought a kit, put in the required eight years of building, and recently had his first flight!

He built a Velocity XL RG-5, all composite, fiber-glass and carbon fiber, with an IO-550 310 HP engine and a 3 blade Aero Composite constantspeed propeller. He has a Blue Mountain EFIS, an autopilot and DVD screens in the back seats for his grandchildren! The plane climbs at 1500 ft/min, and cruises at 205 to 210 Knots. On his trip to Oshkosh this summer, he averaged 12.5 gal/hr overall, including takeoffs and climbs. On the way back from Oshkosh, climbing out of Brigham City, Utah fully loaded, Density Altitude of approximately 8000 ft, the airplane climbed at 1000 ft/min, with outside air temperature about 90 degrees F. These numbers are impressive when compared to nearly any other piston-powered aircraft.

John is comfortable landing on 2500 foot runways. The Velocity stalls at 69 – 70 Knots, so he targets 80 – 85 Knots on final approach, crosses the threshold at 75 – 80 Knots, and touches down at about 75 Knots. In short, we look forward to learning more about John's Velocity XL, and hope you'll join us for a memorable evening.

**Minutes:** General Meeting EAA Chapter 663, 11/4/2008, 7:30 PM , KLVK Terminal Building.

**Chapter president Ralph Cloud** called the meeting to order.

**Two guests** introduced themselves  
**Treasurer Mark Palajac** reported \$4,646.56 in chapter funds.

**The minutes** of the October general meeting needed correcting, Rich Vetterli not Rick Lindstrom mentioned the First Light Aircraft Group (FLAG). Rick was not present. Otherwise the minutes were approved as published in "The Grapevine".

**Business:** Planning for the annual dinner, January 24, '09 continues. The price has been set at \$25 per member and one guest.

Others are welcome at \$30 per person. Dead line for making a reservation (by paying) is Jan. 15<sup>th</sup>. The guest speaker will be aviation writer Lauren Paine, Jr.

**Announcements:** The November board meeting will be November 13, moved up a week.

**Members Forum:** Mark Palajac asked if anyone was interested in ordering EAA Calendars for the coming year. A sign up sheet was passed around.

**Rick Lindstrom** mentioned an open house to include a free lunch at his FLAG facility on Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>. Main topic to be covered: converting the Corvair engine for aircraft use.

**Bob Buckthal** had more engine problems. Main suspect is a loose fuel line fitting at the engine driven fuel pump. He explained the importance of properly tightening a nut on the unusual fitting that compresses an "O" ring with a nut and washer.

**Break and then Program:** Our planned speaker aerobatic performer Jacquie Warda was a no show. (She had a family emergency that involved foreign travel.) So we had members report on the progress of their projects.

Meeting adjourned for pie.

**Minutes:** MINUTES: BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, 11/13/2008, 7:35 PM, RALPH'S PLACE.

**Ralph Cloud,** Don Smith, Dick Jennings, Bob Farnam, Mark Palajac, Bruce Cruikshank, and Jeffry Larson were present.

**Mark Palajac** reported \$4593.00; he is also ordering 11 EAA calendars. Don Smith spent \$209 for a life time supply of name tag materials.

**Ralph** is going to arrange for have T shirts available with our chapter logo though Café Press [www.cafepress.com](http://www.cafepress.com) . Individual members will be able to order their own shirts directly from Café Press.

**Jeffry Larson** reported that he only sent out five paper copies of the November issue of "The Grapevine", very good.

**Don Smith** passed on details of why Jacquie Warda missed the general meeting. She had to travel to Europe to visit her sick father and completely forgot about our meeting. She sent Don an e-mail apologizing for the oversight. Don said John Youngblood will give a talk about flying B-52's during the Vietnam War, and maybe some details of his beautiful new Velocity. Don has many speakers lined up for the coming year.

**Just about everything seems set** for the Annual chapter dinner January 24<sup>th</sup>. Chapter members and one guest \$25 each. Non members will be \$30 per person. Dead line for signing up will be Jan. 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Announcements:** Next meetings are the 4<sup>th</sup>, general, and the 18<sup>th</sup>, board, in December.

**Other issues:** I learned the day of the meeting the access to the airport is going to proximity data cards that will be waved by something near the gates, no more push cards or clickers. There will be a record of people's comings and maybe goings.

Meeting adjourned for pie.

Respectfully submitted, Bruce Cruikshank, Secretary

## PLEA FOR RELIEF

**If you now receive your copy of the chapter newsletter by way of the US Postal Service, you are costing the Chapter more in operating expenses of over \$1 per copy.**

**When you make the correct decision to receive your newsletter electronically, send an email to: [president@eaa663.org](mailto:president@eaa663.org) or [jeffrylite@comcast.net](mailto:jeffrylite@comcast.net).**

**"Grapevine Talking"** continues this month with an interview with Jeffry Larson whom flies a Sonex out of KTCY. If you have any ideas for questions, thoughts or other ideas that you would like to see incorporated into the newsletter, please send me a note via the email address above.



## Grapevine Talking



### *GVT – How did you get into flying?*

Jeffrey – While I was riding horses for a living, I took a ride in a old Bell Helicopter, like the ones they used in Korea. It was during the Humbolt County Fair in Ferndale just south of Eureka. The guy lifted it off the ground about 6 feet, hovered there, asked if we were ready and then wham...we were off.....backwards. We had gone several hundred feet down the grass runway just above the grass when he whipped it around and started skyward. We then had a nice flight out over the coast. At that time my fear of heights had prevented me from getting on or into anything taller than 17 hands. That flight convinced me that I really needed to conquer my fear of heights.

My next airplane ride was in a King Air twin propjet going from Buchanan Field in Walnut Creek to Hollywood. Sitting right behind the pilot, shortly after takeoff he asked if I was thirsty and was told to “push that button” the result of which the bar opened. If this is flying, then count me in. Through the next 15 years I took many rides with the boss, flying in 172’s, Arrows and Cherokee’s. Had the controls for many hours and never logged a single one.

I changed occupations from riding horses to piloting a computer, the weekends being free led me to think about getting into flying again. I took a couple of lessons in a Citabria at Livermore. Shortly thereafter, my daughter Amanda arrived and that was pretty much it as far as flying.

After my son Scott was born and started walking about 4 years later, I started researching FAR 103 Ultralights. Over a two year period, I searched web sites, ordered info packets and videos on over a half dozen candidates. By this time I figured to go from nothing to Ultralight to Sport Pilot when and if it got FAA approval. Being forever the optimist, I signed up for the USUA UL training program in a Rans S12 at Rancho Murrieta. I got sick on the initial flight, but showed up again the next weekend determined to get this thing. I arrived at 7:00 AM every Saturday morning for the next 6 weeks, doing

an hour of flight, then an hour of ground followed by another hour of flight and ending with some more ground.

After much research and playing every video of Kitfox, Challenger, Kolb, Quicksilver, SkyRaider, Rans and even a Sonex video I made my choice.

Having been recruited from my high tech job by another prestigious high tech firm in 2000 during the dot com era, I decided to use my signing bonus to finance my new airplane. I put together all the research and showed my wife that the Kitfox Lite being a traditional 3 axis airplane, built by a company with a great reputation and available as a fully assembled, flight tested FAR 103 Ultralight was the way to go.

I ordered the Kitfox, and anxiously awaited it’s completion. A week before it was scheduled to be complete, the factory called me with some bad news. A Cessna mechanic down the hanger row from the factory hanger had just installed a new engine in a 180. He sat the seat in it and fired it up. Someone later said that he’d somehow wired the throttle backward and when it fired it roared down the hanger row, tipping the “pilot” and the untethered seat over backwards. It ran several hundred feet down the hanger row until it encountered the partially open bi-fold door of Skystar Aviation, home of the Kitfox. It clawed its way under the hanger door, flinging metal parts all around the hanger. It then proceeded across the factory hanger until all remaining parts of the prop had been whizzed about. When the dust finally settled, 5 factory planes were destroyed, including my new Kitfox Lite.

They built me another one and in another couple of months I bought an enclosed trailer and drove to Idaho with my kids to pick it up. Since my folks lived in Caldwell, I could spend a week there, getting it ready for travel all snug in it’s nice cozy trailer. Upon bringing it home to my folks place, my daughter climbed into the trailer and I boosted her into the single seat. She looked around and then noticed that when she ran her finger along the inside of the fabric she could see it moving on the outside. She looked at her mother and ask “Mommy, why did Daddy buy a paper airplane?”

Her mother just shook her head and replied, “I have no idea”. While I was in Idaho, I took 5 hours of taildragger time in an old Champ. The weathered instructor took one look at the cover of my Ultralight log book, hurled into the open window of my truck and said “we don’t even need to look at that crap, we are going to learn how to fly a real airplane.” We started with the basics flying rectangles around the fields, S-turns across the road and turns around the point. Even though he totally discounted my Ultralight flying, he couldn’t believe how well I was doing after a couple of hours. “I believe you could solo this bird in less than 10 hours if you can stay a few more days” he told me after the 3<sup>rd</sup> hour. I credit my success to fact that the Ultralight training had already given me the basic feel of flight and the confidence to handle the bird.

Back in California, I finished my UL cert and completed my solo in the Rans S12. The next weekend I towed my Kitfox to Byron and prepped it, just intending to do some taxi tests. Given the stall speed of 27 mph, 20 was a “fast taxi”. After several runs of herding it down the runway, it’s free casting tailwheel decided it wanted to be up front, yep, I ground looped it. Fortunately a ground loop at 20 didn’t cause anything but the wheels to hit the ground even though one wheel did get into the air. I called my UL instructor as well as the factory and they told me it was probably easier to just fly it than try to tame high speed taxi in it.

The next weekend I took off from Byron and I had a huge grin as I went around the pattern with that 35 hp 2 stroke singing at 6500 rpm. Well, screaming is more like it. My first 5 landings were accomplished on that single trip around the pattern as we went hop, bump, hopping down the runway. They slowly got better and after an hour, I managed to get it down with only a single hop. For the next couple of years I put 60 hours on it, hindered often by the winds in Tracy. One day I arrived at the airport, winds calm. After 15 minutes, I had the wings folded out, preflighted and taxied up to the runup on 25. Wind was now 10 knots at 25, straight down the runway. I decided to go for it and went out over the delta for an hour. I was having fun until I noticed that I was going a lot faster in one direction than I was the other, checked the GPS to find that wind was somewhere over 25

mph. I headed back and was horrified to find that it was no longer straight down 25 but was now straight down 30 which is the normal GA runway. I aborted the 25 pattern, entered for a left downwind for 30. Lookout GA, here comes an ultralight.

Two planes were lined in the runup area as I turned final. “Ok Ultralight, show us your stuff” one of them called over the radio. With the wind at 25 knots, I reduced throttle and found myself hovering above the gravel pit. I had to apply throttle back above 5000 rpm to make any headway to the runway. I watched the numbers out of the doorless Kitfox slide under my wheels and they just kissed the start of them. Without any brakes, we were totally stopped before we got to the other side of the numbers. “Ok, you win....shortest landing of the day” quipped one of the watching Cessna pilots.

Shortly thereafter, I found a Sonex on Barnstormers and after some back and forth email, finally agreed on a price. Then I realized that I had never been in one, what if I didn’t like it. Luckily, Eric Sheppers from Rio Linda was ready and willing to take me for a spin in his Jabiru 3300 Red Devil. The Sonex proved to be just what I was looking for, I took to the controls like a duck to water and other than being a LOT faster than my Kitfox, seemed very easy and stable. My new prospective purchase had 27 hours on it, a Jabiru 80 hp 4 stroke with a center stick and left hand throttle just like my Kitfox. I was ready to embark on Sport Pilot. I sold the Kitfox and trailer, drove to the Canadian border and after spending several hours inspecting it, agreed on the purchase. I hauled it back in a big ol ugly quanset hut trailer that the builder had made to house his project. Customs was fun, but that’s another story.

Barry, Gordy and several guys from the chapter helped me find it a house, inspected it, gave me some things to do and called the FAA. They sent me to a DAR and Big Al came out and did the inspection. Now I had an airworthiness ticket with 5 mandated hours to fly off and I wasn’t qualified to fly it yet. Barry did the initial flight after some extensive taxi testing and when his schedule and mine couldn’t seem to hook up, Eric came to the rescue again, flying down on several occasions and flying off the 5 hours. He then took my instructor, the legendary Lou Fields for an intro flight in it.

When they returned, Lou said to hop in and away we went. The next week we did more landings and the following week after some more landing we headed back to the hanger. After I got out, Lou asked me where my log book was and signed me off to solo. A month or so later, wanting to make the annual Sonex flyin at Rio Linda, Lou and I flew to Rio Vista, then on to Rio Linda. I had to demonstrate at Rio Vista that I could comfortably land in less than 2500' before he allowed me to proceed to Rio Linda. A week later this became my Sport Pilot cross country as well as my first flyin.

After 30+ hours as sole occupant of my Sonex, I took and passed my checkride at Rancho Murrieta, the same airport that I had first solo'd the Rans S12. The date was January 27, 2007, just a few days short of the "deadline" to transition to Sport Pilot from Ultralight. Mission accomplished.

*GVT – That's a pretty good journey. What was the most difficult thing you experience along the way?*

Jeffry – Getting my wife to understand that flying Ultralights or Experimentals wasn't just something that a bunch of crazy's do, but really no different that going out on Saturday morning for a game of golf, only a heck of a lot cheaper.

*GVT – If you were offered the airplane of your choice, free and clear, what would it be?*

Jeffry – P51 Mustang.

*GVT – What does flying mean to you?*

Jeffry – Being able to do something that while not difficult, the biggest percentage of the world has not done.

*GVT – If you won the lottery, what airplane would you buy immediately?*

Jeffry – Probably one of the Red Bull caliber acro planes.

*GVT – What do you like most about aviation?*

Jeffry – The people are amazing, regardless of where you go. It doesn't matter if you are flying an Ultralight, Experimental or GA, everyone likes to look and talk about airplanes.

*GVT – Besides cost, what is single biggest concert about flying in today's world?*

Jeffry– Airports going away, and government interference into the basic freedoms of flight.

*GVT – Neatest (coolest, not tidiest) airport you have been to?*

Jeffry – Columbia– Just a nice friendly little flat spot among those surrounding hills. Can't wait to try my first grass landing in my Sonex.

*GVT - Describe your best and worst landings.*

Jeffry – The one mentioned earlier in my Kitfox has to rank pretty high on the list and I've kissed a few recently with the Sonex which feels really sweet. The worst one was in my Kitfox when I attempted my first crosswind landing. I wound up dragging both flaperons and one wingtip along the ground.

*GVT – Thanks Jeffry for telling your story. I thought we could save this one for some time in the future, but Fall Plan and the holidays just seemed to make the time fly by. Anyone that has suggestions on questions to ask future volunteers, please pass them along. I'd like to keep it varied and entertaining as well as an opportunity to get to know each and every chapter member a little bit better.*

*Don't forget the chapter meeting the first Thursday of each month and keep those cards and letters coming. See this month's video links on the internet.*

Cool video's found on the internet.

[Piper J-3 Cub – First taildragger landing.](#)

[182 – What checklist?](#)

[Bonanza under the Eiffel Tower](#)

[Sometimes it's good to have a BRS](#)

[Who says 3 wheels are the best landing.](#)

[Slip that Champ right on down.](#)

## What is it?

From last month  
I still haven't been  
able to find a valid link.



## What is it?





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