

# WIND IN THE WIRES

EAA Chapter 26



1956-2006



The Newsletter of EAA Chapter 26 ❖ Experimental Aircraft Association ❖ Seattle, Washington

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November 2006

## NEXT MEETING:

2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the Month  
November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2006  
7:30 PM

## LOCATION

Opportunity Skyway Bldg.  
6524 Warsaw St. S.  
N.W. Corner of Boeing Field

## Chapter Web Page

[www.eaa26.org](http://www.eaa26.org)

## FUTURE EVENTS

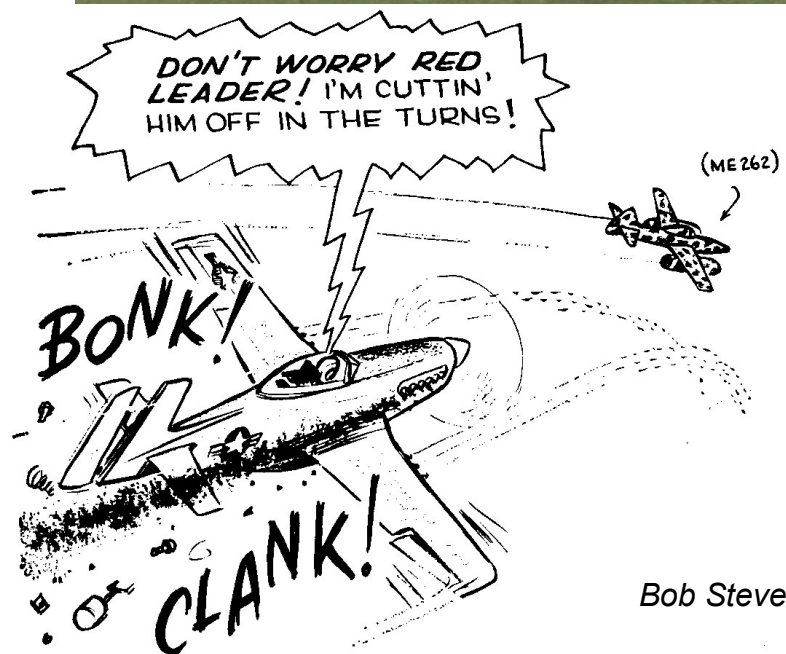
Dec 14: Chapter 26  
Christmas party

January 1: New Year's Day  
fly-out, Thun Field,  
11:30 AM

## NOVEMBER MEETING

### Stormbirds Status!

Chapter 26 Past President Bob Hammer will talk about the activities of the ME-262 project at Paine Field.



Bob Stevens

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE...**

Lots of Projects!

As the winter months descend on us we spend time with various holiday endeavors – From the ghosts and goblins of Halloween, to giving thanks for America and all it offers, to Christmas and other religious holidays, and of course don't forget New Years day! There's time to spend with others – At parties, with relatives, watching the next generations coming along. But it's also a time to look at projects indoors – For myself there are few things more enjoyable than spending several days in a row indulging myself with in-depth research and head scratching on some aircraft related technical issue!

This year my plate overflows with subjects needing research, designs needing development, and ultimately the building and testing of parts. And judging from the comments of people I talk with there are others in the chapter working on similar activities! The challenge I find is to limit how many project you take on at any one time so that you can actually finish one of them up! But choosing and prioritizing can sometimes be a challenge, especially with airplane projects where a change in one place usually affects something else, and so you want to combine projects so save on duplicating efforts. The drawback to this however, is that the projects increase in scope, time required goes up exponentially, and about half way through you wonder what possessed you to start all these simultaneous projects in the first place! And of course you wonder if your bird will ever fly again. All of this starts from a few days around the holidays where you had some time to think, and of course get yourself into trouble!

So as you jump into the holidays, and start spending time on your pet projects, consider keeping your focus on a few things and don't bite off too big a project. For myself, and the Wickham Twin this winter I'm going keep focused on a simple project: Improving the exhaust system. But of course that leads to changing the induction system, which leads to the fuel system, which leads to the fuel tanks, and maybe the cowling needs a little tweaking. And let's not forget the interior panels that are almost done, and developing the new streamlined fairings for the struts using the new tube fiberglass material I found.....) Some lessons are hard to learn!

Have fun!

Ross

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### ***Want to volunteer?***

See any one of the officers about different ways you can help our chapter. You can be a program chair or just help for an event. There's lots to do!

## Jim Wickham

When you think about it, it's practically inescapable.

When an area is the home for one of the world's leading aircraft design and manufacturing companies, you're going to end up with a lot of people with the desire and know-how to both design and build their *own* airplanes, too.

Take the Puget Sound area, for instance. You've got the Kasperwing and the Barracuda. You've got the Fly Baby and the Glasair. From open-cockpit fun planes like the Bakeng Deuce to the jet-powered Zipper.

Not all of the local designers are engineers, or even employed by Boeing. But when they are...well, things tend to turn out a bit special.

Jim Wickham was a prime example. He spent a lifetime designing airplanes for Boeing...while designing and building his own aircraft, at the same time.

He'd gone to college in the early 1930s, first at Ohio State University, then eventually graduating from MIT as an aeronautical engineer. After working a few years at Chance-Vought, he switched to Boeing in 1938 and stayed there for the next four decades.

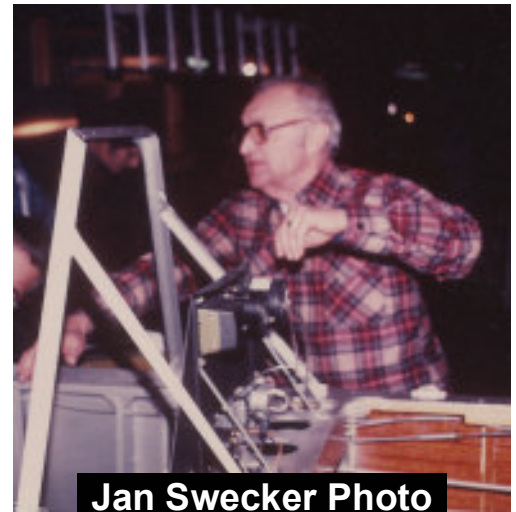
We don't know what led him to design and build his own aircraft. But with his first flight hours coming in a homebuilt glider during his college days, Wickham obviously had a love of flight. Engineering is a hard profession to "turn off" after work; for an aeronautical engineer, using one's skills and knowledge for one's own project is probably as pleasurable as more-conventional forms of recreation.

Starting in the 1950s, Wickham started designing and building his own series of homebuilt aircraft. Most builders start with something small, a one- or two-seater. Back then, most builders stayed with the time-proven wood or steel tube construction, too.

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**Jan Swecker Photo**



**The Wickham Twin (Model B)  
and the Wickham Bluebird  
(Model A)**

## Jim Wickham (Continued)

Not Jim Wickham. His first homebuilt, the Model A “Bluebird,” was a four-seat, all-metal 135 HP cross-country machine. It first flew in 1955. Remember, the CAA’s Amateur-Built rules had been enacted just a few short years before.

Once the Bluebird was flying, he didn’t just rest on his laurels. Two years later, he started an even more ambitious project...the Model B Twin.

The Bluebird had stood out merely from being an all-metal four-seater in a sea of wooden homebuilts. Adding a second engine back then was nearly unheard of...unless the designer used cruddy little lawn-mower engine conversions. Not so for the Model B...Wickham designed it for Lycomings.

Wickham’s design process stood out from the typical homebuilding one in another way: The intense amount of detail and planning.

Back then, many homebuilt designers worked mostly “by ear”...they’d draw some sketches of a fuselage or how the wing might be laid out, then head to the shop. They’d solve the little problems...control cable routing, aileron hinging, window layout...with tools in their hands.



Not Jim Wickham. He approached the designing of his own airplane just like the B-47, B-52, and the other airplanes he worked on for Boeing. He designed the airplane before construction started. And that meant detailed drawings, of practically production quality.

After over ten years of construction, the Wickham Twin first flew in 1968. It’s interesting to contrast the Twin with the 21<sup>st</sup> Century RV-10. The Twin has an empty weight and a gross weight both about 300 pounds heavier than the Van’s kitplane....just about the weight of the second engine! Of course, as Ross, the Twin’s current owner, can attest, the Twin doesn’t quite match the performance of the Van’s bird.

Curiously, after the twin, Wickham switched from metal cross-country cruisers to single-seat, all wood VW-powered fun airplanes. The Model C was a great success, and he sold the Model D before even completing it.

The Model E brought Wickham to his second brush with fame...while spin-testing it prior to sale, he found he couldn’t recover. At the age of 68, Wickham joined the “Caterpillar Club” by bailing out of the stricken aircraft.



After the Model E, Wickham returned to his roots. He began design of the Model F, an ambitious upgrade of the Twin. Large cabin, high wing, all metal, and this time powered by two converted Mazda rotary engines. Ever the perfectionist, he started with a detailed full-scale wooden cockpit mockup.

Sadly, Wickham’s health didn’t permit its completion. He passed away in 2000.



*The Boeing Large Cargo Freighter (LCF) does look a bit like a certain classic American sandwich. But despite the above photo, we don't think Oscar Mayer had anything to do with it....*

## **MARKETPLACE**

For Sale. Building table. 4' x 10', 27" high on wheels. Four large storage drawers. Was originally a cabinetmaker's table; smooth white top; seems very true. Has been passed among several airplane builders for the same price of \$250. James Bavendam 206-232-3059, x201

Commuter II (predecessor to Baby Belle/Safari). 150 Hp Lycoming O-320 has approx. 50 hrs on overhaul. Contact Jim Huber (253) 630-1689.

Wanted: Wanted: Dirty, old, worn-out exhaust parts for Lycoming engines. Looking for old exhaust pipes, tubes, mufflers, and heat exchangers to use for mock-up purposes while developing a new exhaust system for the Wickham B - If you have any stuff you want to get rid of please let me know! Ross Mahon 425.827.2493 or Rossair@aol.com

NWEAA is selling tiles for \$100 with up to 3 lines of 16 characters to help support building the first permanent building to support the Arlington Fly-In. Contact Barbara at flyin@nweaa.org or 360-435-5857, or see <http://www.nweaa.org/building/>

## **News from National**

From [www.eaa.org](http://www.eaa.org)

### **FAA WARNS STC HOLDERS AGAINST ETHANOL IN AUTO FUEL**

The FAA has issued a Special Airworthiness Information Bulletin (SAIB), warning aircraft owners and operators with auto fuel supplemental type certificates to ensure the fuel they use does not contain alcohol (ethanol or methanol). The SAIB reinforces EAA's ongoing efforts to ensure availability of compliant autogas by heading off or modifying legislative attempts in several states to require ethanol in all gasolines sold.

EAA, one of two primary sources of automobile gasoline STCs for general aviation aircraft, advocates that at the very least, states should exempt premium grade fuel from ethanol mandates to ensure a readily available and safe fuel supply for aircraft. EAA sells an auto fuel ethanol test kit for \$15.

### **EAA OPENS AIRCRAFT SWEEPSTAKES TO ONLINE ENTRIES**

EAA has made it even easier to enter its 2007 Aircraft Sweepstakes. For the first time this year, those eligible to enter can do so online through the EAA AirVenture website to secure a chance at winning the grand-prize Aviat Husky donated by Aviat Aircraft Inc., or several other great prizes.

This year's grand-prize Husky is a true backcountry dream machine, with a 180-horsepower Lycoming engine and Hartzell constant-speed propeller. The airplane is mounted on Alaskan Bushwheels 31-inch tundra tires, making it perfect for landing on nearly any surface. Along with AmSafe airbag shoulder harness restraints and Oregon Aero's comfortable seat cushion system, the aircraft also includes a Garmin GPS Map 496, plus Garmin transponder and communications avionics, plus XM music and weather radio.

To enter online, visit [www.airventure.org/sweepstakes](http://www.airventure.org/sweepstakes) and follow the link to EAA's secure site for online entry instructions. A minimum \$10 donation is required for each block of 10 entry tickets entered online.

### **EAAers SELECTED FOR ICAS HALL OF FAME**

Three EAA members are among the four 2006 inductees into the International Council of Air Shows (ICAS) Hall of Fame. They include Marion Cole (EAA 48-Lifetime Member); Eddie Green (EAA 114059); and Patty Wagstaff (EAA 200806, NAFI 9763). Also slated for induction during the annual ICAS convention in December is Paul Mantz.

### **HUNDREDS OF PILOT RESPONSES SUBMITTED ON AIRVENTURE TRAFFIC PROCEDURES**

About 800 pilots completed the online survey at [www.airventure.org/atc](http://www.airventure.org/atc) regarding their experiences flying into EAA AirVenture Oshkosh 2006. The results of the survey, along with numerous comments and suggestions received, are being used in FAA/EAA's comprehensive review of the official notice to airmen (NOTAM) for EAA AirVenture Oshkosh 2007. FAA and EAA staff work each year to improve the arrival and departure procedures .

While individual responses won't be sent to the pilots who provided comments, each is appreciated and will be used in the review process with the goal of improving safety and efficiency for arriving and departing aircraft. Pilots are urged to watch for and read the 2007 AirVenture NOTAM, which will be published in the spring.

## **On the Wreckord**

### **Selected September-October Homebuilt Accidents from the NTSB Web Page**

Mustang II – Indiana: The airplane touched down and was rolling out on the centerline when it suddenly veered to the right. The pilot was unable to straighten out the heading and the airplane traveled off the side of the runway into the grass. Inspection of the airplane revealed the weld which attached the left main landing gear strut to the airframe had failed.

RV-4 – Texas: Pilot experienced a loss of engine power shortly after takeoff. He elected to make a 180-degree turn back to the airstrip; however, the single-engine homebuilt airplane landed short of the runway. The pilot reported having 8 gallons of fuel aboard the airplane for the local flight to his intended destination. The pilot added that while climbing out on runway heading "the engine quit and he was unable to restart it after switching fuel tanks." During the forced landing, the airplane collided with a pipe fence and came to rest in the upright position approximately 40 feet inside of the airport property. The reason for the reported loss of engine power could not be determined.

Kitfox – California: The aircraft, which had recently had some fuel-related problems, lost power while enroute and the pilot landed at a dirt airstrip. The cowling was opened, and the two occupants worked upon the engine. After takeoff, the airplane gained between 200 and 250 feet above ground level and then turned "sharply right." The witness estimated that the bank angle was nearly 40 degrees, and the airplane appeared to be reversing course. No smoke was noted trailing from the airplane. During the turn, no engine sound was heard. The airplane appeared to stall, and then it spiraled down while "quickly descending in a steep dive." The airplane "exploded" upon impacting the ground. Two fatal.

Celebrity – Anacortes WA: Shortly after takeoff the aircraft's engine began to lose power. Pilot reports that the engine did not entirely stop running, but rather "sputtered" at a significant reduction in power. The engine continued to run rough, and the pilot elected to ditch the aircraft into Puget Sound.

Pazmany PL-4 – Virginia: The pilot performed several touch and go landings. On at least one, he held the plane down to build speed then, near the end of the runway, pitched the airplane upward and climbed to about 500 feet. On the final takeoff, a witness observed the plane pitch nearly "straight up". The airplane climbed, then the witness said it "stopped in the air for a moment," and he could see its top surface, "as if looking at it from above." The airplane then yawed left, rotating until the nose was pointing straight toward the ground. It then descended vertically to impact. One fatal.

*Let's all be careful out there!*

### **EAA CHAPTER 26 - MEMBERSHIP INFO**

- Dues are \$16.50 per year, due in **January**.
- If you are a prospective new member we will be happy to send you a couple of complimentary newsletters.
- Please fill out the membership form.
- Make checks payable to "EAA Chapter 26", and pay Treasurer at the next meeting or mail your check to:

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c/o Tim Davies  
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Auburn, WA 98001

# NEWSLETTER



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The Newsletter of EAA Chapter 26

