



CHAPTER 42 NEWSLETTER

March, 2003

Anchorage, Alaska

Monthly newsletter from Chapter 42 of the Experimental Aircraft Association

FROM THE LEFT SEAT

Mid-march offered a horrendous windy period. Unfortunately, several aircraft suffered extensive damage caused by the strong winds. Large trucks, trailers, vans, campers, and a horse trailer came and commingled with airplanes at the Birchwood Airport in an effort to minimize wind damage. It was an interesting sight, and of course, I did not get a picture of the unique landscape.

The Denali National Park and Preserve released their Draft Backcountry Management Plan and it's available at www.nps.gov/dena/home/planning/home.html. To request a copy, call the park at 907/683-2294. The document size is similar to an Aircraft Spruce catalogue. The National Park Service requests comments by May 7, 2003. Some draft plan alternatives address airplane landings in the old and new park. If an EAA Chapter 42 member wants to offer comments and submit them on behalf of our chapter, please coordinate your effort with me.

The Alaska Aviation Coordination Council is looking for an EAA representative to attend meetings at the State DOT upside-down building. This organization includes Alaska Airmen's Association, Alaskan Aviation Safety Foundation, Seaplane Pilots Association, Alaska Air Carriers Association, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, University of Alaska, State DOT, FAA, National Weather Service, and Department of Defense. This council meets every other month and has an opportunity to influence aviation related activities. I offer the opportunity for one of our members to represent our local chapter.

Matt

NEXT MEETING

Our next meeting will be Tuesday March 25, 2003 at 7pm at the home of Jerry Patterson. Jerry is building an RV-8 and has opened his home shop to our members. He lives in west Anchorage at 4840 Retriever Cir. This should be a very nice project to visit. Hope to see you there.

Directions: Going Southbound on Minnesota, take the Raspberry Road exit and proceed west on Raspberry Road to Caravelle, which is .4 miles past Jewel Lake Road. Turn left on Caravelle, right on Hunter and then right on Retriever Circle. It is the second house on the left.

AEROVATIVE COMPOSITES

Special thanks go to Tom Lawhorn, owner of Aerovative Composites, Inc. Tom hosted last months EAA Chapter 42 monthly meeting. Aerovative Composites specializes in custom design, manufacturing, and repairing

composite products for aviation, marine, and outdoor recreation activities. Tom has been doing glass work for over 20 years including a stint with Airglass Engineering Company in Anchorage.

Tom led the group through a demonstration of the vacuum bag process used to make complex lightweight fiberglass structures.

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AEROVATIVE...*



Photo is of Tom Lawhorn (RHS, facing camera) describing the vacuum bag process used to form a ski bottom for an ultra light aircraft.

Editor's Note: Last month we printed my wife Ann's perspective on the visit of a professional builder coming to work on our GlaStar project. This month it's from my point of view.

The Commitment

It all started with a conversation with Paul Kvernplassen last year about getting a jump start on our now aging GlaStar projects. Both Paul and I figured at the rate we were building, we would be too old to get a medical by the time our planes were ready for that first flight. We both knew about Zach Chase from the GlaStarnet, the internet group dedicated to GlaStar builders worldwide. Several builders had written glowing reports of Zach's work on their projects and how he gave them a great jump start. Zach has worked on more than 100 GlaStars either through his former employer or as a private contractor. While he can assist on almost any phase of construction, his real specialty is fitting doors, windows, windscreens and various fiberglass parts to the fiberglass fuselage. From fabrication to gel coat, he is a master.

Paul called around to the Alaska builders and found that Bob Cassell in Wasilla was ready for some help. And so the three of us committed in late October to bringing Zach to Alaska in January 2003, agreeing to split his travel costs and giving him room and board at our homes. Reservations were made.

The Sudden Realization

About the 1st of January I began to realize I might not be ready. I have a professional builder coming to work in my space, on my project and with me helping! No one has really taken a critical look at my 6 years of work. I have a fuselage on gear in the 2 car garage (mandatory space saved for my wife's car inside), wings lashed to the ceiling, flaps and horizontal stabilizer over one cabinet, flaps and ailerons over another, windshield in the crawlspace and various parts around the house. All these parts were built separately, following the manual, and stored for later assembly.

What if the parts don't fit together when we start matching them up? What if he doesn't like the quality of my work? Am I going to look like an incompetent dork when working side by side with a professional? Can he work efficiently in my garage? All kinds of crazy thoughts began to pop into my mind. And one really big deal: The wings need to be mounted to the fuselage to do almost all of the work Zach is coming to do and the space must be warm enough to do fiberglass work!! Let's see, 25' wide garage, 36' wide wingspan. Yikes.

The Prep

After plenty of thinking, measuring and head scratching, I came up with an idea for mounting the wings. Fuselage over near the outside wall, one wing hangs across the garage interior (room for the wife's car below) and one wing out the large window. Being January in Alaska, I knew the outside wing would have to be in a protected shelter and heated. With some joist hangars, 2x4s and 2x6s I was able to frame in an inexpensive "box" around the large window. Picture an 8'x10' window box. To keep the cost down (read, wife happy) I salvaged about 12 old interior doors from a remodel project we were just finishing. Those doors made great exterior sheathing with the addition of the ubiquitous Alaska siding, the blue tarp.

Next, the fuselage must be level to fit the wings. Uh oh. In level configuration, the tail is 8'9" high without the rudder. My garage has 8' ceilings. "Oh well, it's only sheetrock," I told my wife. I cut a nice neat rectangle out of the ceiling, pushed the insulation aside and voila! The airplane is level.

"Don't worry dear, I can patch that when we are done. It's only a 1/2 hour job. Oh, I don't think I mentioned that I need to be here working with Zach for the 6 days he is here. Did I mention that?"

The Arrival

The fuselage is level, the garage is neat and orderly as it can be and I think I know where most of the parts are located. Paul Kvernplassen has loaned me his digital level, transit and home-made wing stands for positioning the wings for mounting. We have the factory jig for drilling the wing struts. By now Zach has worked 6 or 8 days on Paul's 'Star and was working on Bob Cassell's 'Star when I arrived to pick him up. Bob has a huge, heated hangar! I'm thinking, my puny little workspace would fit in the corner of his hangar. Jeez, workshop envy.

Anyway, I had a chance to see Zach and Bob do some final gel coat finish on a rear strake. Wow! The fit was superb and the finish a beautiful, high gloss shine. While hanging out as they finished their cycle, they asked me if I got all the things on "the list"? Panic, panic. What list? Why, the list of all the materials Zach needs to do his thing. You should have gotten it via e-mail. Bob handed me a copy of his. A short list. Only about 20 things from special sand paper to polishing compound. Almost none of which I had in my shop.

Fortunately, Zach had a planned day off between projects. While he was out playing (he and Brad Cruz drove to Girdwood and went for a dogsled ride in the pouring rain), I was driving all over Anchorage locating things like tongue depressors, blue 3M (no other) tape, 3M sand paper, 100 single edged razor blades (use 'em once and toss 'em), latex gloves (large), West system microlight, mylar tape and lots of other things they don't have at Wal-Mart or Freddy's. My wife says, "where are you going?" "Oh, just need to pick up a few things for the project. No big deal," says I. Eventually, she knows all. She pays the credit card bills. But for now, I have some float time.

The Work

Aside from trying to keep my real estate work on track and social commitments fulfilled while working on the plane, the actual work was sort of anti-climatic. We usually started around 9 or 10 am and went late into the evening and even until 1 am on one occasion. The beer stayed in the fridge until we stopped airplane work and often we would have a few cold ones at the end of the day. We talked about the work we had done, what was left to be done and life in general.

Like most professionals, Zach could deftly do his thing while I managed to help more than hinder. He was not appalled by the quality of my previous work nor did he make fun of my make-shift hangar or any of my tools. He was as good a teacher as he was a craftsman and often took time to explain why he did what he did, why he was so specific about tapes, sand paper and other materials. For example, he uses Scotch brand Mylar tape like a clamp when installing windows and other parts. It stretches and holds and the glue, and it doesn't leave a residue on the Plexiglas or shell. He insists on the color tinted Mylar because the clear is very hard to see when applied and easy to forget to remove it.

I learned what a friend a hot glue gun can be, especially when used with tongue depressors and cleverly shaped paint stirring sticks to hold parts in place while fitting, fiberglassing and drilling. I saw paint stirring sticks shaped into specialized tools for finishing fillets in hard to reach places and smoothing a near perfect surface on a bead of caulk. These are things you don't get from the manual.

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AEROVATIVE (con't from page 1)

Tom's expertise in working with composites was readily apparent in the speed and ease with which he laid up and formed the bottom for an ultralight ski assembly. Tom builds several different models of aircraft skis and also hold the STC for an extended baggage compartment for certain Cessna 180 aircraft. Consider Tom a valuable resource for advice and assistance on your composite needs. Tom can be reached at 240-6712 or at tomlawhorn@hotmail.com.

FLY MART

Free to members. Contact Tim to place an ad: tim@timrittal.com or 907/248-2249.



FOR SALE: LOM 232 4 cylinder lowline with Murphy Rebel mount. 15 hours total time, comes with all accessories. \$8,500 OBO. Julian Smith, 694-7881.

FOR SALE: 45:100 epoxy ratio pump by Michael Engineering \$50. Call George Dorman 349-1864.

FOR SALE: Schempp/Hirth Austria SHK-1, N909D, serial #7. Built in 1965, the last and best of the German plywood ships. Glide ratio of 38 at 54 mph. I have the logs and manual. The sail plane is in good condition, but needs refinishing. The price is \$5,000 including the trailer. See website for pictures: <http://ewtq.tripod.com/> or Email: ewt@gci.net. Phone (907)-243-7245. Eric Tasker

HE SAID (con't from page 2)

I did have to ask my wife to leave her car outside for a few days. Not that it couldn't have been squeezed in but, "as a safety precaution to protect her beautiful finish." She was okay with this, probably because we were experiencing May weather in February.

In six days Zach put in 66.5 hours and I put in a few more. We mounted the wings and flaps, installed the top deck, 2 top skylight windows, one side window, 1 door window, both doors, hinges and latches, fitted the windshield to 99.9% ready to install. We also built and installed the rear strakes (a compound curved beast attached to the fuselage at front side of the horizontal stabilizer) and mounted the horizontal stabilizer and its associated bracket.

When all is said and done, I am willing to bet Zach did in 66.5 hours what I would take 200 or more to do and he did it with greater quality. It also helps that he was a gracious guest and knew how to co-exist with me and my wife.

Was it worth it? You bet. Great progress was made, my wife is still talking to me and the pocketbook didn't get hurt badly at all. I recommend the concept to anyone needing a boost on their stalled project. I am sure there are hired hands for just about any kit and none better than Zach for a GlaStar. Last I heard, he was on his way to Switzerland to disrupt the lives of 3 guys over there.

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MONTHLY MEETINGS 4th Tuesday
243-4239 ext 4242 for location/program

TREASURER'S REPORT

If you still need to submit your dues for 2003 (\$24) contact Chris Gill at 227-9352, pay at the next meeting, or mail your check to 2618 East 20th Avenue, Anchorage, AK, 99508. We also still have a few 2003 calendars available (\$10). These can be purchased at the club meetings or at Reeve Airmotive on Merrill Field.

SOME SAD NEWS

Fred Goff, 88, long time member of EAA Chapter 42, passed away March 3, 2003 at his home. According to a quote from his family in his obituary in the Anchorage Daily News, "He was among a handful of ancient aviators still flying at 88. He restored a Curtis Robin and built his own Wag Aero Cubby, which he flew in June 2002 with Channel 2 documenting his first flight on TV. A favorite saying was, 'You only live once, but if you work it right, once is enough.'"

We will miss seeing Fred at our EAA booth at the upcoming trade show. In years passed, Fred volunteered many, many hours at our booth. Let's all wish him a safe, smooth flight to his next destination and our condolences to his family. A graveside service will be announced in the spring and will be at Angelus Memorial Park Cemetery.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS (local events in bold)

April 6, 2003

Daylight Savings Time begins...be sure to set your clocks one hour ahead ("spring forward") Saturday night before going to bed

April 2-8, 2003

Sun In the Fun EAA Fly-In, Lakeland, Florida

May 11, 2003

Mother's Day

May 17-18th, 2003

Alaska State Aviation Conference and Trade Show
(FedEx hangar)

June 7, 2003

EAA Chapter 42-Saturday Morning Flight
10:00 am, meeting location and destination TBA

June 14 and 15, 2003

EAA Chapter 42-Backcountry Airstrip Improvements
Meet at May Creek

June 15, 2003

Father's Day

June 21 and 22, 2003

EAA Chapter 42-Backcountry Airstrip Improvements

Meet at May Creek (Weather Alternate)

July 5, 2003

EAA Chapter 42-Saturday Morning Flight
10:00 am, meeting location and destination TBA

July 9-13, 2003

Northwest EAA Fly-In, Arlington, Washington

July 26, 2003

EAA Chapter 42 Annual Summer Picnic at
Birchwood Airport; noon until the food is gone

July 29-Aug 4th

EAA AirVenture at Oshkosh

August 2, 2003

EAA Chapter 42-Saturday Morning Flight
10:00 am, meeting location and destination TBA

September 6, 2003

EAA Chapter 42-Saturday Morning Flight
10:00 am, meeting location and destination TBA