



CHAPTER 42 NEWSLETTER

October, 2007

Anchorage, Alaska

Monthly newsletter from Chapter 42 of the Experimental Aircraft Association

FROM THE LEFT SEAT

I am really looking forward to this month's meeting. I have not seen Dick Reeve's project since, I think, the beginning of 2005. At that time it was still pieces, parts and plans. Now his plane has a life of its own and a certificate of airworthiness to go with it. My hat is off to anyone that can adopt a homebuilt airplane project, either kit or plans, and focus on the goal until completion.

I was really impressed to receive a letter from Senator Ted Stevens. His return letter was in regards to the reauthorization of the FAA letter of concern that I sent to him. He said that Senators Inouye, Rockerfeller and Lott, the lead sponsors of the bill, have committed to continue to address our State's unique aviation needs. Senator Stevens was also concerned that the proposal would reduce funding for the Airport Improvement Program and the Essential Air Service program. Both of these cuts would have an impact on Alaska. As of today I still have not received a reply from Congressman Don Young, but I hope that he replies and shows his concerns for the aviation issues at hand.

The end of October meeting will be my last meeting as the President. I will miss the November meeting because our daughter was kind enough to buy my wife and I airplane tickets to Germany from November 24th until December 19th. When we return we will be getting ready for our move to Colorado Springs. I have really enjoyed all of the friends that I have made since I joined this Chapter in 1999. At the October meeting I will encourage nominations for anyone that wants to become an officer. Best wishes to those people. I hope they enjoy the responsibility as much as I have.

Take care,

Mike Luther

**EAA Chapter 42
Monthly Breakfast
2nd Saturday of each month
Pipers, 3333 W. Int'l Airp Rd
9:30am**

NEXT MEETING

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, October 23rd at 7pm. At last, we get a chance to see Dick Reeve's recently completed and airworthy Lancair Legacy. Dick's Lancair is located in T-hanger "I" at 2021 Merrill Field Dr. It is on the south side of the runway and the north side of Merrill Field Dr, across from AeroMap. Please park in front of the T-hangar and along the east side of the building. See you there.

"The October meeting is in a rented T-hangar. One of the ways to get reasonable rental rate is to waive any rights I or my insurance might have under a legal theory known as Hangar Keeper's Liability. My landlord and I have both been in the airline business. The waiver makes sense to both of us who have shared hangar space to help out a friend.

"On this basis, we have agreed that each of you is my 'guest' and that I am solely responsible for anything that may cause you harm. There is no recourse through the hangar's owner. Period. Each of you is cordially invited if you agree that your presence as my guest is without recourse to the landlord. If you don't agree, you're not invited. Period. This is a crummy way to frame an invitation, but that's the way it is. On the other hand, it should be an interesting meeting." ~Dick Reeve, L2K-233 N233RV; EAA 758788



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Sunday, October 7th was a beautiful evening with clear skies and calm winds. Perfect time to get some take off and landing practice in my GlaStar. I took off from Lake Hood strip north across the inlet and then on towards Birchwood. En route I dialed in the Birchwood automated weather, winds were calm and I flew over and did a nice landing on runway 01. Since the weather was ideal, I decided to go on to Knik Glacier area where I knew of a long, flat grass strip where I had done some training a few days before.

There are lots of practice strips in the Knik Valley but I liked this one because it is relatively long, maybe 1800' and relatively flat and wide. No rocks. A nice straight path is obvious where other aircraft have done similar work but you could actually land on either side and be okay. I liked the margin for error.

I did a fly by to check the strip and the wind, which was calm, and set up a normal landing pattern and approach. My three point landing was clean and on target. However, on roll out, I got on the brakes about the time my wheels rolled through a slight dip and the next thing I knew I was on my nose and over on my back. It happened so fast I never had a chance to react. I was in total disbelief of what had just happened and now I am hanging upside down in my shoulder harness. I had presence of mind to unhook myself and switch off all the electric. I can testify that I was not thinking 100% clearly at this point. It occurred to me I needed to get out of the aircraft in case of fire, but where the hell is that door knob?!!! What seemed like minutes, but was probably only seconds, I found the door latch and out I went. I was pretty well stunned at what had just happened so fast. Now what? I need to call my wife and tell her I am okay.

Back up a bit. As I was leaving my house this fine evening

my wife says, "Are you going to take the satellite phone?" "No" says I, "I am only going to Birchwood and then to Knik and I have my cell phone!" What was I thinking? Ten miles up Knik Glacier Valley your stinkin' cell phone is not going to work. All those beautiful mountains. I should have realized that.



Oh, oh! Upside down and pointed the wrong way!

Back to the plane. I reached for my cell phone and dialed. No signal. I began walking out into the valley where I might get a clear shot down towards Palmer. No signal. Further, no signal. Once I realized this was fruitless I jogged back to the plane. My ELT was transmitting and I removed it from the plane and attached the external antenna and let it continue. I checked for fuel in the cockpit and around and decided to give the radio a try. Long story short, no response on all sorts of different frequencies including the ELT 121.5 both through the radio and through the ELT itself. Looks like I wait for the National

Guard to extract me. It's about 8pm by now.

The worst part of this whole mishap was knowing my wife was going to worry sick not knowing my condition. She knew where I was and I was sure help would be along soon but it would a long wait for her. New policy: no flying without the sat phone in my vest.

By 10:45pm it was starting to get a little chilly and I am thinking I might be spending the night. If no help by 11pm I'll set up the tent, which was in my survival gear bag. By 11:30pm I was in the tent and laying comfortably on my seat cushions. \$2000 seat cushions make great sleeping pads for anyone interested. I was settling in for what I figured was going to be a real long night and sick about what my wife must be going through when I heard a low whup, whup whup. That must be my ride!

Enter the Air National Guard with a crew of six wearing night vision goggles. They landed 100 yards away and two guys came and asked if I was okay and escorted me to the chopper with my bag of essentials and the ELT, now turned off. I left the tent to ward off any bad guys. First thing I did once I was buckled in was ask the guy nearest me if he would let my wife know I was okay and he said yes. That was a huge relief.

They flew me to Kulis, which happens to be about a mile from my house. My wife and her brother were waiting to drive me home. It was a very happy reunion.

Next day, after notifying FAA and NTSB and my insurance agent, I flew out to the plane with Matt Freeman and together we pulled all the panel boxes. The radio, the 2 Dynon flight instrument and engine instrument units, transponder, CO detector and 2 electronic ignition boxes. Fortunately all these had been expertly wired by Ron Braun and mounted in frames and they slid out easily. The whole job took less than an hour. I wanted to get them out of harms way from men and nature. We looked the plane over in the light of day to see the extent of the damage. The windshield was broke, one blade of the prop bent, one strut bent and obviously the top of the rudder was smashed down. One wing tip had a foot long ding and the cowling had a couple of 3" cracks. Overall, the wings looked straight and in good shape, the horizontal untouched and the vertical looked good as did the entire fuselage. Back to town and a huge thank you to Matt (and Ron).

My insurance agent told me they would handle the transport of the plane to the shop and that an adjuster would be contacting me. Kevin Wyckoff of Alaska Claims Services, Inc. called me and after briefing him on the situation he said he would arrange for a helicopter to pick up the plane and fly it to Palmer. No choppers were available that day but could do the job the next. I was relieved for the help but after thinking about it and talking to others who had been in similar situations I decided I wanted to be there when they lifted the plane and to prep it by removing the horizontal stabilizer which was unscratched.

Kevin was fine with this arrangement and he gave me the contact numbers for the helicopter outfit, Northern Pioneer. Owner Jim Acker said no problem, call him in the morning to set up a time as their chopper was in Delta Junction till morning.

Once again, Matt Freeman came to the rescue and took time off work to fly me back out and help with the prep work prior to the chopper arriving. Right on time the copter showed up with pilot Shamus and assistant Matt (another Matt). Very professional and very skilled.

continued page 3: Hard Lesson

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HARD LESSON (continued from page 2)

They had my baby back on her feet in no time without causing any further damage. We strapped the horizontal stab on top of the wing and off they flew to Palmer. That GlaStar goes through the air beautifully, even while being dragged by a rope.

Matt and I arrived at the airport just about the time the copter did and they set it down ever so gently. Matt and I rolled the airplane off to a tie down. I was very happy to have her back in town and right side up.

Next step was to get the plane to a shop for evaluation. Kevin, the adjuster, could not have been more helpful. We talked about various shops that might work on an experimental/homebuilt. Eventually I decided to try Wick Air in Palmer. Kevin located a trailer and arranged a time to meet me at the airport. Meanwhile, John Davis offered to help if he could and I was off to Palmer. Arriving first, I prepped the



At last! Glad to be back on her feet.

plane to fold the wings, which is pretty handy for trailering down the highway. Kevin came next and graciously helped me fold the wings, which they did nicely, much to my relief. Bolted in place she was ready for the trailer and the road. John flew in about this time in his RV and taxied up to assist. The first trailer was enclosed and too narrow. Kevin took off for a different flat bed. What a trooper. Soon the GlaStar was on a trailer and off to Wick Air with me following and John off to another appointment.

Kevin introduced me to the owner, Mel Wick. I was immediately impressed with his attitude and demeanor. He just felt like the kind of professional I wanted working on my banged up baby. I left her there in his care and hope to hear by next week the full extent of the damage. I am very hopeful. That will be another story.

Now, the lessons learned.

First, if you have a satellite phone, don't leave home without it. Even for just a short hop. That single item would have saved my wife a terrible evening of worry and anxiety and I could have called a friend to come and get me without calling out the National Guard. Those 6 guys who had to leave their homes and families to come pull my butt out of the mountains would have appreciated it. Have a list of phone numbers you will need in an emergency stored with your phone. It will be mandatory equipment in my vest from now on.

Second, file a flight plan. Get comfortable and proficient with this and it will become as automatic as buckling your seat belt. Matt was a great example of this. He has a master plan on file with Kenai FSS and he can file and open a VFR flight plan in about 30 seconds. Done. He filed both times on our short hop to my GlaStar.

continued page 4: Hard Lesson

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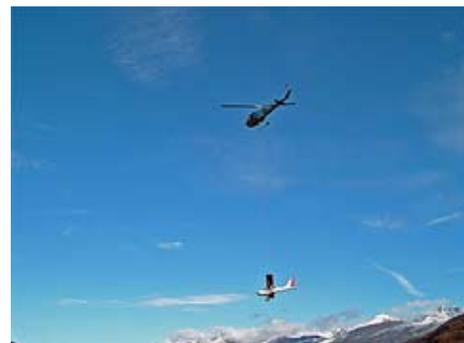
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HARD LESSON (continued from page 3)

Third, make sure your spouse or other concerned person knows what to do if you do not show up on time. Have a written procedure with up-to-date phone contacts. Annie knew this and it helped her when the time came. (This will be another story.)



Northern Pioneer Helicopter takes off to Palmer.

Fourth, have survival gear on you or at least on board. Best on you. My tent, food and flashlight were a nice source of comfort as it got dark and the temps started dipping into the 20's. Not real cold by Alaska standards but not much fun either. A head lamp is far superior to a handheld light since it leaves your hands free. There are lots of good headlamps

with LEDs, which last a very long time on one set of batteries.

Fifth, have a list of local radio frequencies at your finger tips in case of emergency, whether in the air or on the ground. In my case, the radio would not reach out but circumstances could have been different. A back up hand held radio would be good especially if you do not have a sat phone.

Sixth, have and use a cargo net or other adequate baggage tie down method. My 30 lb survival bag was held down by 2 medium duty bungee cords, which were joined in the middle and hooked to 4 tie-down rings in the floor. The bag did not come forward but at least

one of the bungee hooks was straightened out. Thank goodness I did not have a toolbox or other hard, heavy gear back there.

Seventh, clearly identify your door latches. My black knob was hard to find even in the daylight. I plan to paint it a fluorescent color at least and will probably put some sort of glow in the dark marker like I see on my tent pulls and guide line. Seconds can count if you have a fire.

Eighth, and maybe should have been first for me, go easy on the brakes. I had about 800' of airstrip left ahead of me when I went over. I didn't need brakes at all. It was a stupid mistake and a hard lesson. Hard on me, hard on the plane and hard on my family. I doubt I will repeat that one.



Matt Freeman surveys the damage back at Palmer. Horizontal stabilizer lashed on right wing.

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