

WIND IN THE WIRES



The Newsletter of Chapter 26, Experimental Aircraft Association ❖ Seattle, Washington ❖ Volume XVI No. 4 ❖ Apr 2008

NEXT MEETING:

2nd Thursday of the Month
April 10th, 2008
7:30 PM

LOCATION

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

Chapter Web
Page

www.eaa26.org

APRIL MEETING

General Aviation Accident Investigations

Kristi Dunks from the NTSB will discuss how the organization investigates General Aviation accidents, and share some insights into several accidents.



FUTURE EVENTS

Apr 8-13—Sun 'n Fun
Fly-In

Apr 19: Saturday
Night Movies at
Harvey Field:
“Those Magnificent
Men in their Flying
Machines” Hangar
15, 6:30 PM

May 16-17—Sportair
Workshops “RV
Construction”,
Arlington

2008 OFFICERS

President: Tom Osmundsen
253.239.6175
dieselfume@dieselfume.com

Vice President: Geoff Sharples
206.232.5933

Secretary: Don Davis
425.822.3439

Treasurer: Tony Livic
206.842.0754
aglivic@hotmail.com

PROGRAM CHAIRS

Tech Counselor: Geoff Sharples
206.232.5933
Jim Huber
253.630.1689

Flight Advisor: Ross Mahon
206.550.9526
Rossair@aol.com

Young Eagles: Kent Loos
206.818.9937
gofly77@comcast.net

Fly-Outs: Cecil Hendricks
360.894.7144

Video Library: Steve Crider
253.630.6114

Photo Records: Don Davis
425.822.3439

Newsletter Editor: Ron Wanttaja
253.833.7394
Ron@Wanttaja.com

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE...

Flashback: The Bravest Man I Never Met

Our esteemed President has been working a lot of overtime lately, and didn't have a chance to put a column together this month. He gave me permission to re-run a column from when I was President.

Ron Wanttaja

What kills pilots?

We can scan the statistics for specific answers. Continued VFR into IFR. Buzzing. Running out of gas. Trying to shoehorn fast airplanes into too-short runways.

The pilots involved probably knew what they were doing was unsafe. But they went ahead anyway, thinking they had the ability...or the luck...to get away with it. Maybe they were too blinded by their own confidence to perceive the danger.

Or perhaps they didn't cancel a flight because they didn't want to look bad. They died because they had to maintain their image of being a "hot pilot". With apologies to the ladies, I call this "Death by testosterone poisoning."

The disease can sometimes be tough to resist. Let me tell you about a successful case.

The Museum of Flight used to hold an annual paper airplane contest in the Kingdome. One year, the advertising promised a special event as part of the contest: An ultralight would fly inside the Kingdome!

My wife and I went. Two canard-type ultralights stood ready on the Kingdome floor. At the appointed time, the announcer brought his microphone up to the first pilot and interviewed him about the aircraft. The pilot explained the details of the sport, and explained he'd make a takeoff run while running the aircraft in an oval around the Kingdome floor.

The engine was started, producing the smoke and whine of the early '80s two-strokes. The plane started turning its ovals around the floor of the arena. It made about four laps on the ground, then slowed to a halt without breaking ground.

(Continued at bottom of next page)



EAA AND THE ARLINGTON FLY-IN SIGN NEW SPONSORSHIP AGREEMENT

EAA and the Arlington (Washington) Fly-In, one of the nation's top recreational aviation events, have signed a new working agreement that brings higher visibility to the Arlington event and clearly defines EAA's role in the popular fly-in. The agreement underscores the shared missions of the Arlington Fly-In, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2008, and EAA, the 170,000-member international organization that is dedicated to the spirit of aviation.

Under the agreement, EAA will provide extensive promotion and coverage of the Arlington Fly-In, and also serve as a major sponsor of aviation educational activities such as forums and workshops during the event, among other considerations.

EAA, CHAPTER 312 WORKING TO REVERSE "NO FIRST FLIGHT" RULING

EAA and Chapter 512 in Placerville, California, are working together in an effort to reverse a decision announced in early December 2007 that prohibits first flights in homebuilt aircraft at the Placerville Airport. In December, an FAA inspector informed a builder that due to housing density around the airport, first flights in homebuilts would no longer be allowed, in accordance with FAR 91.305.

"No person may flight test an aircraft except over open water, or sparsely populated areas, having light air traffic."

Chapter 512 President Kay Morgan, EAA 450518 and NAFI 13026, has been working with EAA government relations staff to try and reverse the "no first flight" rule.

President's Message (Continued)

The announcer ran to the airplane. He thrust the PA microphone into the pilot's face.

"What happened?" he asked.

The pilot answered: "I chickened out."

Could you have said that in front of thousands of people promised a spectacular aerial feat? Not me. I would have blamed the engine, or use any of the host of little white lies pilots use to hide bad...or even good... judgment.

A great writer can vividly describes a character in few words. Here, three words ("I chickened out") tell us a lot about a real-life pilot. He trusted his own judgment. He didn't let the crowd's presence sway him into doing something unsafe. And he had guts enough to not hide behind false excuses.

Did he make the right decision? We'll never know. The other pilot started his engine, made a few laps around the oval, and took off. He landed safely a minute or so later.

We can all imagine how the first pilot felt.

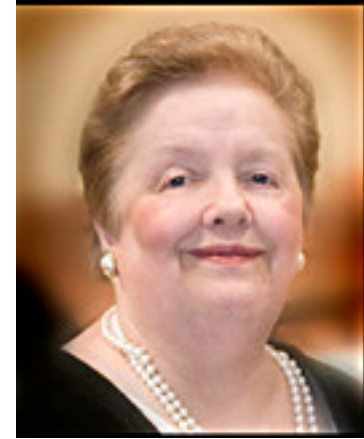
Did the experience lead him into folly on a later flight? I don't think so. He'd already shown he could make tough decisions under pressure. I'd like to think he's still out there, buzzing safely through sunny summer skies.

So the next time the scud starts dipping toward your cowlings or the gas gauges start tapping the "E", think about that ultralight in the Kingdome. The true measure of a pilot is not the length of his obituary. The true measure is the peace of mind he feels when he grins and says, "Well.... I chickened out."

Rita Creighton 1947- 2008

Rita Creighton died unexpectedly at home March 16, 2008. She had a career at Boeing and with King County International Airport as the Community Relations and Aviation Education Program Manager, and for a long time was Chapter 26's main contact with King County Airport. She was fundamental in not only arranging our meeting places, but ensuring airport support in the form of projection screens, PA systems, etc.

Rita was a pioneer of Aviation High School and actively worked to see the school built. Rita was also appointed by Gov. Gregoire to the Highline Community College Board of Trustees. In Lieu of flowers, please make a donation to one of Rita's Passions. Aviation High School P.T.S.A or Highline Historical Building Fund.



Chap. 26 Vice President Suffers Stroke

Longtime Chapter 26 member and current Vice President Geoff Sharples suffered a massive hemorrhagic stroke in mid-March. It was caught early, and he had surgery on March 14th to relieve the pressure/remove blood clot. The surgery went well.

At last report, he has been moved to Evergreen Hospital, Purple Section, 4th floor room 376.

He's typically quite busy morning and afternoon with physical therapy. Late afternoon and evening is the best time for visitors.



Suspect a Stroke? Think F-A-S-T

With strokes hitting two long-time members of Chapter 26 already this year, it'd be a good idea to review what to look for. Medical science has made great strides in treating strokes, but the key point is to react quickly. The faster those around the victim recognize what's happening, the better chance for a good recovery.

When you suspect someone may be undergoing a stroke, think **F-A-S-T**:

- Face:** Have the person smile. Do they smile normally, or does one side of their mouth droop?
- Arm:** Have them raise their arms. Can they do both evenly, or is one weaker than the other?
- Speech:** Are they speaking clearly, or are they slurring or acting confused?
- Time:** If the person is showing these symptoms, note the time and call 9-1-1 ASAP. Tell the operator the time of onset...it's important in the treatment.

The State of the Sport

By Ron Wanttaja

Some people say, "Ron, you're easily amused," and I think they're right. Just about every year, I download the FAA aircraft registration database and have a cracking good time analyzing the trends in homebuilt aviation.

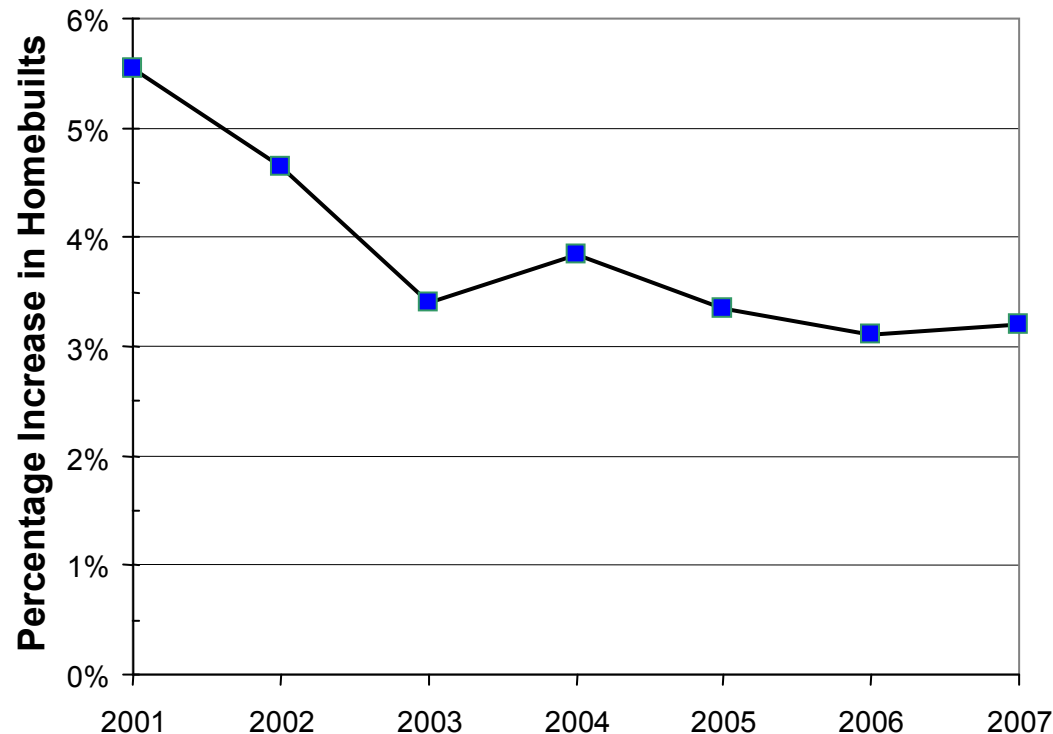
I've been doing this for about eight years now. I have the proper subroutines on my computer where much of the process is automated, but it still takes an evening or two to

manipulate the FAA files to generate the statistics that hint at where our sport is heading.

So the next several pages include some plots of the results of my analysis of the January 4th 2008 registration database.

For those keeping score, there were 30,367 Experimental Amateur-Built aircraft on the rolls on that date.

Annual Increase of the Homebuilt Fleet



The plot to the left illustrates the increase in the homebuilt fleet size for every year since 2002. Note that the rate of increase had been dropping through 2007; if one just eliminated that very low 2004 data point, the drop would have been almost linear.

But, judging from the 2007 result, the tendency may have flattened out.

The drop may be a sort of "echo" of the failure of several major kit companies in the mid and late '90s. It takes years to build an airplane, and the loss of a company in 1999 wouldn't affect the completions of previously-purchased kits for several years.

The homebuilt industry did seem to stabilize itself out in the early 2000s, so that might be why the slide flattened out last year.

The State of the Sport (Continued)

Size of Homebuilt Fleet vs. the Overall Number of Registered Aircraft

Cheerier news, here. The plot shows what proportion of the overall FAA registration database is occupied by Experimental Amateur-Built aircraft, here, you'll notice a steady increase: Homebuilts composed about 7.5% of the registrations in 2001, but had risen to almost 9% by the end of 2007.

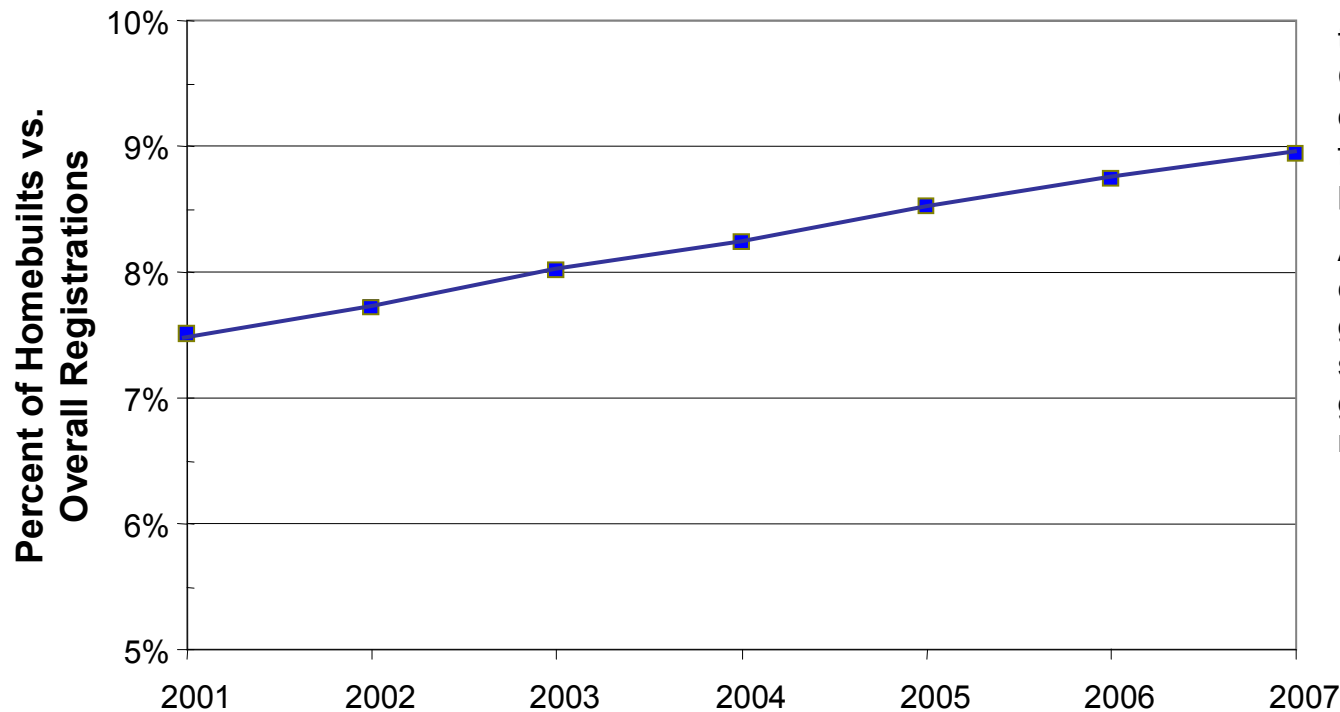
I personally find this data a bit surprising. During the last eight years or so, Cirrus and Cessna have been selling a fairly large number of aircraft. During some years in the '90s, more aircraft were built in garages than factories.

But that really hasn't been true in the post-2000 period.

So, what's happening here?

One potential cause is the fact that the FAA is working weeding out inactive registrations. The number aircraft listed on the rolls is the net; the number of aircraft added minus those removed.

Unfortunately, this isn't really a satisfactory explanation. A falling tide should lower all boats...why wouldn't the homebuilts be affected just as badly? Why is the annual percentage increase in the number of homebuilts dropping, yet the percentage of homebuilts in relation to the overall fleet increasing?

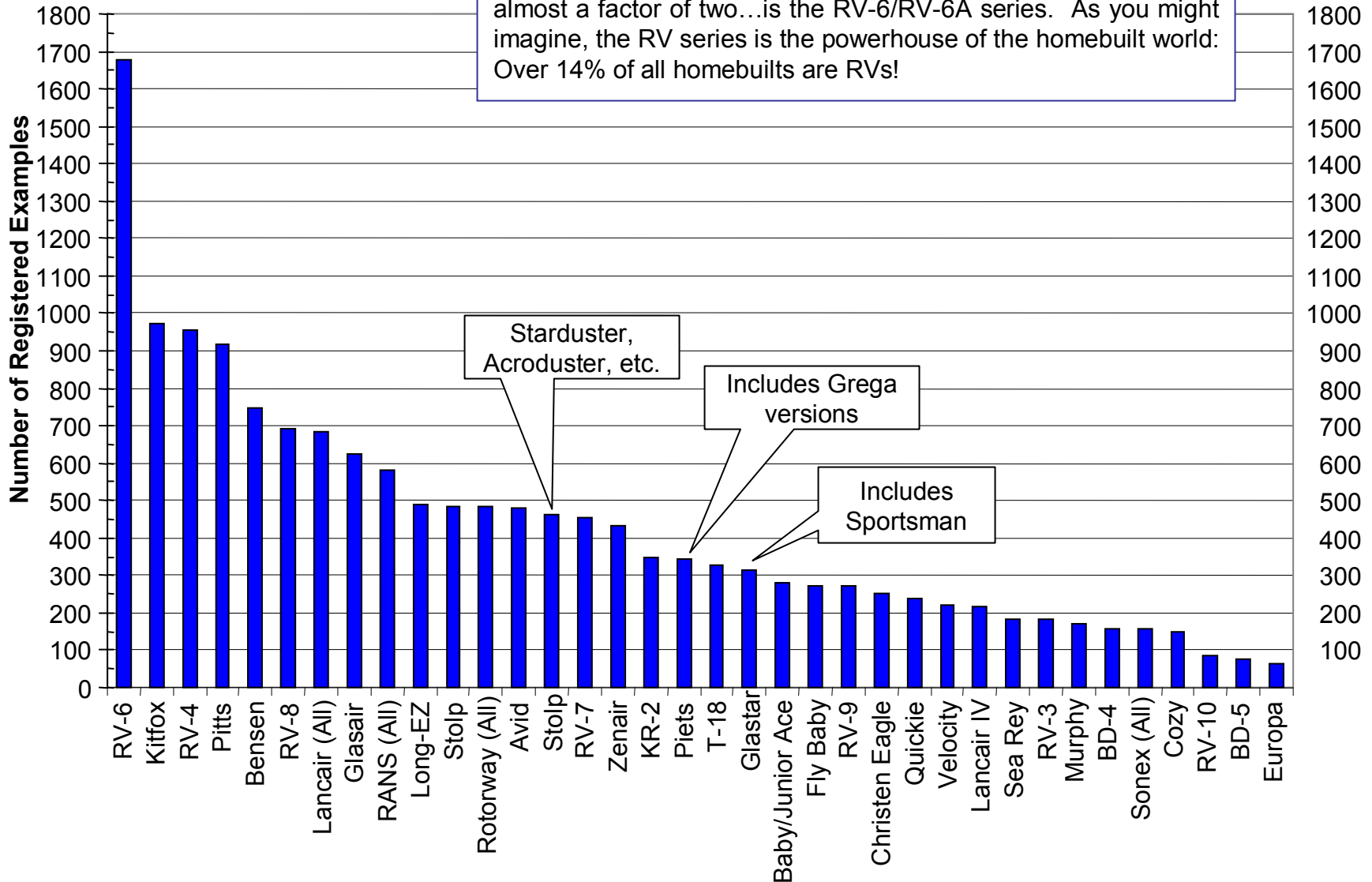


It could just be policy; perhaps the FAA is presuming that a Cessna 172 disassembled in an owner's garage is less likely to fly again than an airplane that person has built.

About the only other potential explanation is that the overall growth of aviation in the US is slowing, but homebuilding's growth still exceeds the growth rate of the industry as a whole.

The State of the Sport (Continued)
Total Registrations for Popular Homebuilt Types

OK, here's the fun stuff. This shows the total number of registered examples of each aircraft type. The winner...by almost a factor of two...is the RV-6/RV-6A series. As you might imagine, the RV series is the powerhouse of the homebuilt world: Over 14% of all homebuilts are RVs!



Marketplace

For sale: 1958 Colonial Skimmer Lake amphibian - precursor to the famous Lake LA-4 and Lake Buccaneer amphibious airplane series. Though type certificated, this particular Skimmer is in the experimental category. The engine has low time. The radio panel is adequate but minimal. The main gear wheel hubs, nose gear strut and all hydraulics have been totally overhauled, The plane is intact and has all ADs complied with (I think). The owners estimates that it will take between 8k and 20k to make the plane properly airworthy.

The airplane itself is a very economical three place machine. It has excellent performance and burns about nine gallons/hour at 65-70 percent cruise power. It is actually a rather rare bird ... one of only a handful still in flyable or restorable condition. There is a lot more information about this plane, other Skimmers and the owner's experiences flying it at: <http://www.reputableman.com/> . Asking \$36,500 Craig... 206-498-9447

For sale: Tires – 15/6.00-5, 6ply, 2 tires, 2 tubes. Brand new, unused, with yellow tag. These are retread tires that are heavier duty than standard – With deeper treads and harder rubber they'll last longer than new. They work well on 5 inch wheels, but give a larger tire size for unimproved runways. Great for your RV or T-18! \$125 for the set. Ross Mahon 206.550.9526 or Rossair@aol.com

Zenair 601 HDS Project for sale: Firewall back, including fairings, LR fuel tanks, and lights. Price negotiable. Terry Wilson, 206 522-4006.

Wanted: Lycoming O-235 engine, will consider any version, prefer run out engine in need of overhaul. Ross Mahon 206.550.9526 or Rossair@aol.com

Former EAA member Keith Klinck recently passed away and his wife Helen has his Smyth Sidewinder project up for sale. This is a 1960's vintage design, all metal, tricycle gear configuration somewhat similar to an RV-6. The project has a completed fuselage and many other component parts and aluminum sheet. For more information call Ron Klinck at 425.739.0715.

Airpark Home Seattle / Port Orchard. Vaughan's Airpark. Charming 3br. 2-1/4ba. Country Farmhouse style home with wrap around verandah & upgrades, on 2.47 acres with loafing shed and cross fencing for horse. Attached hangar/workshop/garage. <http://mysite.verizon.net/resun6v1> (253) 857-4330 after 6PM or lv. msg

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:

EAA 26,
c/o Tony Livic
3546 Gangmarken Ln NE
Bainbridge Island WA 98110

(Note: Members who have not paid by March will no longer receive a newsletter)

On the Wreckord

Recent Homebuilt Accidents from the NTSB Web Page

RV-4 – North Carolina: After a low pass, the pilot pulled up and performed an aileron roll, then came around again and landed. About two hours later, the pilot took off again and performed a low pass over the runway at an estimated 8 feet. The airplane then pitched up and rolled to the left while continuing to climb. At the top of the climb, the airplane appeared to perform a "split s", and began descending in a nose-low attitude. The witness further reported that before losing sight of the airplane due to obstructions, the airplane was flying nearly perpendicular to the runway and began a rapid nose-up pitch change. The witness then observed a fireball. One fatal.

Kitfox – Florida: The pilot set up for a straight-in approach to a private airport. During the final leg of the approach, the visibility was "slightly restricted" due to the morning sunlight coming from the east and haze. About 1/2 mile from the runway, the airplane encountered a slight downdraft, so the pilot increased engine power. About that time, the airplane's tailwheel struck an unmarked transmission wire about 150 feet above the ground. The airplane then pitched down, impacted the ground, caught fire, and was destroyed. When asked how the accident could have been prevented, the pilot stated in part, "[have] more altitude on final approach."

Genesis – Georgia: While on final approach for a touch-and-go at approximately 25 feet above ground level, the airplane suddenly yawed 90 degrees to the right. The pilot applied full power, but the airplane contacted the ground, bounced, then was, "...pushed to the ground." The airplane collided with bushes then came to rest. He further stated there was no mechanical failure or malfunction.

Glstar – Colorado: The aircraft was substantially damaged during a hard landing. There was a pronounced dip midway down the runway. The pilot, who has approximately 105 total flight hours and 25 hours in make and model, told an FAA inspector that he landed "hot" and hard in a slight tailwind. The airplane began to porpoise. The nose wheel broke off and the airplane skidded to a halt.

Christen Eagle – North Carolina: Just prior to landing, the left wing struck trees, and the airplane impacted the ground near the runway threshold. The airplane came to rest inverted, but was able to exit the airplane unassisted. The trees were located approximately 80 feet prior to the threshold, with tops approximately 20 feet above the runway elevation. The runway threshold was not displaced, and the presence of the trees was not included in the commercially available obstacle notation.

Air Cam – California: The pilot was flying at a low altitude over a river into hazy conditions and looking directly into the setting sun. The pilot stated that as he was preparing to turn to miss a flock of birds the airplane impacted a set of transmission wires, which severed the airframe's wing support structures. The impact with the wires forced the airplane to a lower altitude and under a bridge in the airplane's flight path. After flying under the bridge and exiting on the opposite side, the airplane impacted a second set of transmission wires with the airplane's landing gear legs. The pilot then made a successful forced landing on a river gravel bar and came to rest upright. A witness observed the airplane flying about 20 to 40 feet above the river before going out of sight. The witness reported, "Approximately 5 seconds later I heard a 'large impact,' followed by an electrical discharge sound and the power going out at the campground."