

EAA CHAPTER 1128

Two Harbors Helgeson Airport

www.1128.eaachapter.org

The wind is howling at the lake tonight, it blew my windsock into a little strip of orange cloth on a ring. Winter is finally full upon us and I'm glad I spent all that time splitting wood this fall. We have another special meeting coming up on **January 5** at **THHS**. We will be screening the theatrical release of **One Six Right** at **6:30** in the **Community Room**. It's all about general aviation and it got great reviews from the aviation press. Seth will bring the movie and Mike will bring the "making of" video.

Last Meeting

Our Christmas party was a happy success, members of all three local chapters and their guests enjoyed good food, a free raffle and some original music. The grand prize, an hour of flight instruction in Piper Sport LSA, was won by new member Mike Gaboury and he is generously making plans to share his good fortune. Mike Busch wrote and performed some new songs as did your newsletter editor. Lots of hangar flying and warm conversation filled out the evening.

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Chapter 1221 had their Christmas party at the Cozy Cafe in Carlton on December 13. I hope they had as much fun as we did.

Chapter 272 has their winter party at Blackwoods in Proctor on January 21. They always have a good time.

ETC.

The new song I made up for this year's party describes how I met Fifi. Here is the whole story: Many years ago I met an older gentleman named Jim at our airport. He was working in a huge enclosed snowmobile trailer on a Kolb Firefly. We had several nice conversations over the summer, he was there almost every time I stopped by the airport. I learned that he had built a Rans S-7 when he lived in Colorado but had to give it up when he lost his medical certificate. This was before the Light Sport rule so the only way for him to keep flying legally was with an ultralight. His trailer was well organized and I could see he was doing good, careful work. I talked him into joining our chapter and began sending him newsletters.

As the summer turned to fall I saw less of Jim but the trailer remained. Then years went by and I didn't see him at all. One day I got a letter from Jim's son telling me his address had changed. The new address was in Roseville and that seemed odd so I phoned the son for details. He said Jim had moved into an assisted living facility and that just broke my heart. The son promised to keep up with chapter dues so Jim could still receive the newsletter, he enjoyed reading it. More time passed and the trailer just sat, its tires now sinking into the asphalt. I made another call to ask what Jim's plans were for the project. There was a long silence then he said, "Dad doesn't even remember that he built a plane." I was so sad to hear that and I volunteered to do whatever I could to help. I explained that I

had owned a Kolb myself and knew a thing or two about them so he asked if I would look it over and give him an estimate of its worth. When I inquired about the trailer keys he said they didn't have any idea where they might be but he had power of attorney and granted me permission to cut the padlocks. I went to Harbor Freight and bought the biggest bolt cutter they had but it still took all of my strength to cut those fat Yale shackles.

I opened the smaller front ramp first and sun filled the trailer for the first time in many years. I was immediately smitten. I had only seen the project from the rear and the cute little nose fairing practically winked at me. I was very happy with Miss Chaos and not in the market for another airplane but she just drew me in. With flat tires and a blanket of dust she looked every bit the forlorn, abandoned princess and I wanted to rescue her.

Upon close inspection I decided she was in that home-builder limbo of 95 percent done, 95 percent to go and I really didn't want to see her on the open market. I pictured someone with little experience assuming she was ready to fly and having a very bad day because of it. I presented that argument to Jim's son and promised that if he would accept my paltry offer he would never have to worry about such a scary scenario. He took me up on it. I had no use for the trailer but brokered a deal with a friend of mine so all of Jim's airport assets went to good homes.

When I started digging into the details I found ample evidence that the scary scenario could well have happened. Pulling the cylinders off the Rotax engine I concluded that she had been run but not for long. That was bad because some of the prop bolts were barely better than finger tight. Bob Payne stuck his nose in the cockpit and immediately spied two lead weights hidden behind aluminum panels. They weighed ten pounds each! The build manual suggested some weight in the nose for very light pilots and Jim was small but I am not and it could have resulted in a very nose heavy situation. Twenty pounds is almost ten percent of the weight of the entire airframe. I removed gobs and gobs of tape, duct tape, electrical tape, painters tape, bookbinders tape, even scotch tape. It may have been temporary or maybe not but replacing it all with zip ties and adell clamps made me feel a lot better.

The biggest gotcha escaped my attention until I tied her down to do the engine break-in run. Rotax specifies one hour of run time at different rpms to insure proper ring seating. About half way through I stopped to get more fuel and as I walked past the wing tip something snagged my sleeve. Looking back I saw, to my horror, the center wire of the piano hinge holding the flaperon had vibrated halfway out of the hinge. I quickly checked them all and found most were coming out and two of them were already on the ground! If this had occurred in flight, I shudder to think what would surely have happened. I crimped all the hinge ends, finished the break-in procedure then spent hours using an even finer toothed comb to look at every detail again. I also asked Bob and anybody else who walked by to double check my work.

When finally I convinced myself she was airworthy I started taxi testing and got some new surprises. The thrust produced by 40 horses even at idle caused me to have to shut down the motor just to turn around. (Ultralights don't have brakes). Over on the grass runway drag from the turf helped a lot. Brief bursts of full power had me heading for the weeds every time. A very big prop on a very light airframe makes 'P' factor with a capitol 'P'. The needle in the airspeed indicator never budged off of zero and the multi-function engine gauge showed a lot of numbers that made no sense to me but I eventually felt like we were forming a bond and just went for it.

Homesick Angel! She climbed like there was no gravity and I had to pull the throttle way back just to settle into an easy cruise. She was very polite though and responded to each control input like the perfect lady. I was in love and remain so to this day. Of course I'm still in love with Miss Chaos too and that's the beauty of anthropomorphism, I can have two girlfriends and they can be sisters!

Go kiss your 'other woman' on the spinner every chance you get
and.....Happy Landings!.....

