

# Western Rotorcraft

October 2011



## KBFFI: Warm, Windy, Wonderful

Sorting through photos of the Ken Brock Freedom Fly-In, it's hard to find one which properly conveys the atmosphere. The lakebed is so big and perfectly flat that trying to capture it in a single photo makes it look desolate and uninviting, a little like the surface of the Moon with gyroplanes. The camp is spread out along a straight line, so it's hard to get everything in one frame. So, this issue of WR will present just a handful of photos, and a little more storytelling than we've tried in the past.

If you finish reading and come away with an impression of the annual El Mirage meet as a somewhat harsh physical environment with a very warm and friendly bunch of people, you're getting the right idea. And it's possibly the greatest place on Earth to solo a personal rotorcraft. (Above, first-time KBFFI attendees Greg Hardy, left, and Steve Pearson, right, look on as CFI Mike Burton straps in to fly Steve's beautiful Dominator on Friday morning. All three came to the event from Utah.)

### **PRA 1 Report** **Terry Smith, President**

The KBFFI happened the 23rd – 25th of September. What a GREAT time! There was some concern earlier in the week due to the lake being closed for being wet, but it was “business as usual” by the time the fly in rolled around.



The weather was perfect for flying! The mornings were calm, and there were trikes, powered parachutes, and of course, GYROS getting in some early morning air. The breeze picked up a fair bit around noon, but didn't keep the gyros from flying. Vance Breese flew about 47 (that's right 47!) introductory rides over the 3 day gathering. There were a LOT of smiling faces getting out of the Predator! (Continued on page 2.)

## **Regional Report**

**Paul Plack, NW/Mtn Rep**

It's easy to get a little discouraged under the relentless downward pressures of the economy, the FAA, and the pessimists in our own sport, especially as another fly-in season draws to a close. But there's uplifting news everywhere if you're looking for it.



PRA 2 held its first meeting ever in the Salt Lake City area in August, at Hexatron Engineering. I'm not sure why, but Chapter 2 has always met at out-of-the-way airports well south or well north of the metro's population center. The plant tour and demo of the Hexadyne P60 engine were great, but we were just as excited to see three guys from the area who haven't been active in our group before. All are gyro enthusiasts, and between them already own a gyroglider and an RFD Dominator single-place gyro.

For our September meeting, we again met near the center of the metro at Utah Helicopters, on the South Valley Regional Airport in West Jordan, UT, a western suburb of Salt Lake City. One of the guys who joined us at our August meeting, Steve Pearson, got to watch as his Dominator got its first test flight with CFI Mike Burton at the controls. It was great to see the spark re-lit in Steve, who ended up joining us for the annual trip to El Mirage.

More good news - Airgyro Aviation is back in the gyroplane training business, starting with a SparrowHawk, and will soon become a distributor and training center for the AutoGyro line of gyros from Germany. When CFI Mike Burton is ready to offer year-round training in a new Calidus, it will be a huge shot in the arm for our entire region.

Brock Steiner from Chapter 73 has earned his instructor rating, which means training is back at Sport Copter in Scappoose, OR, at least part-time. Brock will instruct in the company's excellent open tandem machine for now, but he's an independent CFI who next year will likely also have his own SparrowHawk ready. This is sensational news for anyone west of Arkansas who has found it difficult to get access to two CFIs. We're hoping Brock can bring his new machine to Rotors Over The Rockies 2012 in June, which could give attendees access to two CFIs with two training aircraft, in one place at one time, for the first time in the event's six-year history.

How quickly things can go from looking down, to looking up! You never know when exciting, positive developments lie just ahead. I'm already pumped thinking about next year, and you should be, too!

## **KBRA / PRA 1 Report (cont)**

The wind REALLY picked up on Friday, and one of the canopies set up for the event didn't survive the gusts. Everyone in the immediate area pitched in and held on to the canopies to make sure they didn't do a "Mary Poppins." The winds died down by dinnertime, and we were treated to Brandon Evans masterful grilling of steaks, with veggies, potatoes and salad. And, Brandon was presented with a beautiful Birthday cake later that evening.

The gyros went up again for a short time until sundown, after which many people gathered back under the canopies to relax and talk.

Saturday started out just as Friday did, with plenty of morning flying. The crowd picked up, and we saw many new visitors, as well as familiar faces. Nathan's Polish hotdogs were the fare for lunch, with Brandon volunteering his skills on the grill (Thank you Brandon!). The afternoon wind stayed with us much longer than in the past, which made for a breezy dinnertime. It was BYOB (Bring Your Own Beef) night, with beans, and corn on the cob. It was great to see everyone gathering together around the fire pit to grill their food!

Dr. Bruce Charnov gave a wonderful presentation on the History of the Autogyro (it was a bit of a challenge prior to the presentation to set up the projection screen with the wind being stronger than usual, but we used a camper as a back stop to the screen), and following that were the Awards and raffle.

Vance Breese won 2 Awards that night - Distance Furthest Flown in a Gyro to the event, and Pilot and Machine awards. Kevin Richey was awarded for trailering his Gyro the Furthest Distance to the event. The raffle followed, and thanks to all of the generous contributions from our wonderful gyro community, it was an extremely fun evening. There were 2 silent bid items - a Sport Copter Instrument panel, and a Benson Gyrocopter Weathervane. These 2 special items were won by Dave Wilson (Instrument Panel) and Brandon Evans (Weathervane).

Sunday morning once again gave us calm air, with gyros chasing each other in a "dogfight" with some powered parachutes getting some final moments in.

The event started really winding down around noon, with the majority of the fliers packing up for the trip home. The last gyros to finish flying were Teddy's (back over the fence to his hangar) and Kevin Richey - who saw a pair of glasses lost by a fellow pilot the day prior from the air, and subsequently found them after driving around the lakebed - way to go Kevin!

I would like to take a moment to thank everyone who



## **KBRA / PRA 1 Report (cont)**

took the time to attend the fly in this year. It was a pleasure to see all of you and get the opportunity to spend time together. I especially want to thank everyone who helped make the KBFFI happen – my fellow Chapter members, as well as all the help from the rest of the gyro community who made this such a success.

I hope all of you had as much fun as I did, and I look forward to doing this again with you in 2012!

### **Like a Glove**

At the end of the event, I was given the opportunity (one that means a lot to me!) to get my first experience in the seat of a Sport Copter! Kevin Richey asked me if I would like to taxi his gyro on the lakebed to get a feel for what it's like to be in command of a gyro. Well, that took about as much time to decide as it takes to blink an eye!

While I've seen the Sport Copter many times in the past (and even sat in one briefly), those moments did not prepare me for what was to follow. Kevin explained the mechanics of the gyro to me (a pre-flight without the flight!) so I would not be too unawares as to what was happening. With the wind gusting fairly strongly that day, we made sure the rotorhead brake was engaged. I certainly did not want this to become an airborne experience (Well, maybe I did just a little, but only in my dreams!)

The first thing I noticed was how comfortable – really comfortable! – I felt sitting in the Sport Copter. And not just because of the “cyberseat” that the gyro has (which, by the way was more comfortable than many cars I've driven in). The entire layout of the gyro made me feel “as one” with it. It was easy to get

into, and you almost feel you're in a sports car. I did hold the stick further forward than normal for flight, as with the rotors not spinning, we did not want to have the rotors making contact with the prop – I want my own blades someday, but I'd prefer them in 1 piece! Kevin cleared prop, and pulled the cord to start the 503. That's the one thing I'd have to change for me –electric start needed! – as I have a bad shoulder. I advanced the throttle slightly and began a total of 30 minutes (30 minutes!) taxiing at different speeds up and down the lakebed.

Up-wind I gave it more throttle so I could try out some steering with the rudder, and downwind kept the throttle at idle – there was PLENTY of wind to push me. I was nervous a first – I DID NOT want to have any mishaps on Kevin's baby – but it didn't take long to feel more at ease with the gyro.

While I never left terra firma, I could now see what it must be like to skim low over the ground, feeling the wind on your body, giving you clues to its change. It's certainly like the description Paul Bergen Abbott described in the book “The Gyroplane Flight Manual” – sitting in a lawn chair (a very comfortable one!) with a magic wand in your hand.

It was also great to experience the toe-operated brakes on the Sport Copter. It did not take much of an effort to get used to using them. To be fair, I've not yet experience nose wheel steering with the rudder pedals as on other gyros, but the differential braking on this gyro worked just great for me.

Even now, 8 hours later, I can still feel the sensations I had during my short “flight” in Kevin's gyro. I'd certainly have to say that all in all, the Sport Copter gyro fit me like a glove. It's a weekend like this that continues to motivate me to get my own gyro (and training!) as soon as I can make it happen. And after today, the Sport Copter is certainly a gyro I'd consider getting for my own. Time will tell!

My thanks goes out again to Kevin. He's a generous friend, and he has made my own dream of getting a gyro that much closer. (Top of page, L-R, Kevin Richey, Terry Smith. Below, Terry is ready to taxi.)





## ***El Mirage Notes*** ***Paul Plack, Editor***

I'm just jotting down a few random thoughts as I process my weekend at El Mirage. First, for having their group almost disappear after the death of founder Ken Brock, the members of Chapter 1 turned out enough committed volunteers in the days before, during, and no doubt after the meet. They always do. Kudos to those who make this event happen.

A recurring story among attendees was dramatic weight loss to meet aviation goals. Kevin Richey and Vance Breese both looked to have lost 50-60 pounds from last year, Jeff Jones maybe half that. Chapter 1 President Terry Smith lost even more a couple years ago. At the same time, I talked to attendees facing excess weight and its related issues who appear to have given up on regaining their health and flying again. I'm hoping I can remain motivated enough to win that fight with my own body.



Kevin Richey has shared his Sport Copter with several friends who are without machines of their

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own. On Saturday, I noted to Kevin that his Hobbs meter had just passed 100 hours. He told me that only about 65 of those hours were his! Kevin offered Terry Smith the chance for some taxi time on Sunday. A Chapter 2 member who got that chance at ROTR back in June, Glenn Kerr, was so excited by that opportunity that he has since bought his own gyro, and missed KBFFI in order to pick it up in Texas. Kevin's contribution to growing the sport may take years to fully appreciate.

I'm so proud of my friend, Vance Breese, who took 50 people for intro flights in the Predator (page 8). I'm amazed at how Dr. Bruce Charnov manages to keep coming up with historical facts about gyroplanes we've never heard. Next year, Chapter 2 carpool participants are just going to ask Rose Pearson to bring enough of her marinated elk steaks for our whole group Saturday night. They were sensational!

Final note to Chapter 1 - The porta-potties with built-in sinks, soap and water get a thumbs up!

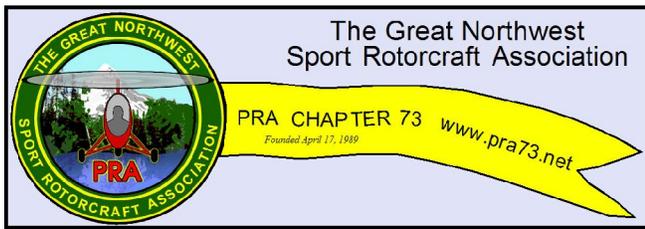


## ***PRA 2 September Report***

The September 10 meeting was called to order by President Doug Barker at Utah Helicopter at South Valley Regional Airport. The internet connection in the office failed a few minutes after the webcast was launched. Doug reported funds on-hand of \$640.35, and total membership of 26. His report was approved. (Joel Rawley joined following the meeting.)

Mike Burton announced a SparrowHawk is expected to be online for training within days. Airgyro will become a distributor for AutoGyro, with a Calidus trainer with Rotax 914 turbo to be available soon.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20am, and we all exited to the hangar to enjoy the annual picnic, and see three gyros brought by members: Doug's Super Sky Cycle (above), Steve Pearson's Dominator, and a folding glider (details on page 7) owned by Steve and Greg Hardy. (Paul Plack, Secretary.)



## **PRA 73 September Report**

1:05 PM: President Bob Johnson called meeting to order. Thanks to Orville and Hester, Bob and Jim Miller for bringing food for our potluck.

Introductions: Seventeen members and visitors were present. Everyone introduced themselves.

Projects: Prospective member, Jud Ketold, gave a report about installing the motor in his gyro. Clint Martindale brought his PitBull to the meeting on a trailer. It is ready to fly and is for sale with trailer.

August Meeting Minutes, as printed in our newsletter, were approved. Treasurer's Report, given by President and Treasurer Bob Johnson, was approved.

News: Bob Miller represented PRA 73 at the Wings and Wheels event. He talked to lots of folks about gyros, and gave out brochures to anyone interested. We need to print more brochures.



Visitor Eric Pothal is buying a Sport Copter Vortex kit. Dan Dalke is concerned that we need to get more exposure at Fly-ins. Club voted to renew President Bob's membership with NWAAC. This allows PRA73 to use their clubhouse during cold months. Jim Vanek's Sport Copter II gyro included in one of the 10 best aircraft for law enforcement.

More of the new Lycoming engines are being sold. Brock is still putting together his Lycoming engine for



his new gyro. This is the same engine used in Cub Crafters Carbon Cub.

President Bob talked about Paul Plack's gyro webinar. It is done at the same time as our monthly meeting. We decided to leave our meeting time as is.

Nominations for officers held today. One nomination was for all present officers (Bob Johnson president and treasurer, Jim Miller vice president). Other nominations were Clint Martindale vice president and Jon Daily president. Nominations will continue at the October meeting.

1:44 PM: Meeting adjourned. Welcome to new members Jon Daily and Evan Dagle.

## **Glenn Kerr's Gyro Adventure**

PRA 2 member Glenn Kerr is one of a half-dozen gyro enthusiasts who've had the chance to get a little time at the controls of Kevin Richey's Sport Copter Lightning, and been motivated to pursue their dreams with renewed enthusiasm.

Glenn followed up on this renewed enthusiasm, following his time in Kevin's machine at Rotors Over The Rockies in June, with over six hours of dual instruction with CFI Steve McGowan at the PRA Annual Convention at Mentone, IN in August. While there, he committed to the purchase of a used Butterfly Monarch with Rotax 618.

Unfortunately, the only time which worked for buyer and seller to take delivery of the machine in Texas was the weekend of the Ken Brock Freedom Fly-In at El Mirage, so Glenn didn't make the event, but his enthusiasm is still running high. The account on the following page is edited from several of Glenn's posts on the Rotary Wing Forum, as he seeks to finish his instruction with CFI Mike Burton in Utah. (See p. 6.)



**Monday, September 26** - "Today I begin training with Michael Burton at AirGyro Aviation in a Sparrowhawk. I'm hoping to get enough this week that I can transition into the Butterfly. But we'll see how it goes. Stay tuned..."

**Wednesday, September 28** - "Today was a great training day! We got going in the Sparrowhawk and I was on it from the start. Really in the slot. I had a little issue that shook me up a bit about an hour in, so we stopped to regroup and give me a chance to settle down. I was taking off and landing very well by the end of that session.

"I thought we would get one more session in the Sparrowhawk before the end of the day, but Michael had other plans...Balancing on the mains in my very own gyroplane! He briefed me on how the Monarch was going to act and off I went. I got to do three passes down the runway before the pattern filled up with airplanes all doing their own training maneuvers. So I chose to stop so I wouldn't be causing a traffic jam on the runway. But I did it! I can balance that baby on the mains pretty well.

"Michael briefed me on tomorrow's agenda and goals. One session in the Sparrowhawk until the morning wind dies out. Then he will fly the Monarch 30 miles south to Nephi Municipal where we'll spend the rest

of the day getting me in the air IN MY VERY OWN GYROPLANE! The goal is to have me flying IGE (in ground effect) from one end of the runway to the other. If I do well with those exercises, I might get to fly the pattern. Stay tuned..."

**Friday, September 30** - "Yesterday was my last day of vacation and I was hoping to solo in the Butterfly, but it was not to be. I did .4 hrs in the Sparrowhawk first thing in the morning. Practiced landings, including simulated engine outs, and pretty much nailed it. So Michael decided to head south to Nephi and get me airborne.

"But the wind had other ideas. Approx 12 kts blowing down the runway. Too much for either of us to feel comfortable with me getting the wheels off the ground. I ended up doing 6 runs down the runway on the mains before the wind got too strong for that too. I got very comfortable with balancing on the mains. I'm disappointed that I didn't solo, but it will come."

At top of page, CFI Mike Burton test-flies Glenn's Butterfly Monarch at Nephi Municipal Airport in Utah. We all look forward to Glenn's completion of his training now that dual instruction is once again available at Airgyro Aviation in Spanish Fork, UT. Read Glenn's full thread by clicking [here](#), or find it at [www.rotaryforum.com](http://www.rotaryforum.com).

## ***That Folding Gyro-Glider!***



PRA 2's Steve Pearson and Greg Hardy own this folding glider that fits neatly in a pickup bed!



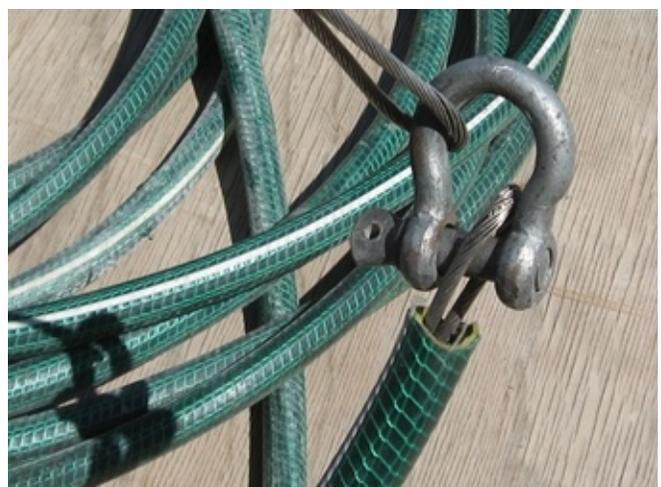
...Fold the main gear axles out and bolt in place...



...unfold the keel, mast and control rods, slide the twin pump-handle joysticks into their receiver tube, a few more bolts and...voila! Ready for rotorblades!



Those are folding boat seats from K-Mart. The guys use a 75' cable (below) in a garden hose for visibility and protection from wear. (Above, L-R, Steve, Greg.)





**More El Mirage Photos** - Above, L-R, Vance Breese, ready for takeoff in the Predator; Pat Richey, who got her first gyro flight with Vance; Kevin Richey.



Above,, the view from the back seat of the Predator as Vance flies over the dirt strip at the Brock ranch.



Above, CFI Marion Springer got a Lifetime Achievement Award from PRA Chapter 31.

## Upcoming Rotorcraft Meetings

**KBRA (PRA 1)** Saturday, October 8, 11am PDT.  
Teddy Udala's hangar, El Mirage, CA.  
[Info: \(562\) 493-3960](tel:5624933960)

**PRA 2** Saturday, October 8, 10am MDT.  
Airgyro Aviation, Springville-Spanish Fork Airport, UT.  
Details and directions: [www.pra2.org](http://www.pra2.org)

**ARC (PRA 15)** Saturday, October 15, 11am MST.  
San Manuel Airport ([E77](http://www.az.gov)), Arizona.  
Contact Britta Penca at (520) 840-0951.

**SDCRC (PRA 31)** Meets third Thursday. Locations vary (CA). [Request](mailto:Request) e-mail notice from John Rountree.

**CRA (PRA 38)** Next quarterly meeting TBA, Meadow Lake Airport ([KFLY](http://www.kfly.com)), Peyton, CO. Updates, flying and driving directions at [www.copterpilots.org](http://www.copterpilots.org).

**GNWSRA (PRA 73)** Saturday, October 8, 1pm PDT,  
[Sport Copter](http://www.sportcopter.com), Scappoose Ind. Airport, OR ([KSPB](http://www.kspb.com)).  
Potluck at 12n, mtg at 1pm. Details: [www.pra73.net](http://www.pra73.net).

**URA** Saturday, October 8, 10:15am MDT.  
Airgyro Aviation, Springville-Spanish Fork Airport, UT.  
Details: [www.utahrotorcraft.org](http://www.utahrotorcraft.org).

## Gyroplane for Sale

**AIR COMMAND** - 214 hours TT. Single-place w/ pod, extended keel stability mod. Rotax 503, dual carbs, CDI ignition. New Sport Copter 23'-x-7" rotor blades, redundant mast, PowerFin prop. Airspeed indicator, altimeter, engine & rotor tachs, EGT, CHT, Hobbs, compass. N6149H, registered E-LSA, logs and paperwork in order. Flies like a champ! \$9,000. Contact Britta, 520-840-0951. (AZ, 7/11)

## Wanted to Buy

**ROTORBLADES & HUB BAR** - Seeking Rotordyne or McCutchen Skywheels rotorblades with hub bar for two-place gyroglider. Contact Steve Pearson, [huntjunkyaol.com](mailto:huntjunkyaol.com), (801) 910-6117. (UT, 10/11)

Classified ads are free to members of participating PRA chapters and other participating rotorcraft clubs in the western US. Contact your local group for details or to place an ad.

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