

# ***Western Rotorcraft***



***My First Gyro Flight!***

***November 2012***



## Regional Organizations Meetings & Contacts

### Arizona Rotorcraft Club (**PRA 15**)

Third Saturday, 11am MST, Various Locations  
 Nov 17, 11am, Coolidge Airport Camping Area  
 Carl Matter: [keenuk@aol.com](mailto:keenuk@aol.com)

### Ken Brock Rotorcraft Assoc. (**PRA 1**)

Nov 17, 7am, El Mirage Dry Lake  
 El Mirage Dry Lake (CA)  
 Terry Smith: [terry.smith@earthlink.net](mailto:terry.smith@earthlink.net)

### San Diego County Rotorcraft Club (**PRA 31**)

Third Thursdays, Locations Vary (CA)  
 For info on next meeting contact  
 Dave Bacon: [davesconcretepumping@msn.com](mailto:davesconcretepumping@msn.com)

### Colorado Rotorcraft Assoc. (**PRA 38**)

Locations, Dates & Times Vary (CO)  
 For info on next meeting contact  
 Mark Shook: [Mark@CopterPilots.org](mailto:Mark@CopterPilots.org)

### Great NW Sport Rotorcraft Assoc (**PRA 73**)

Nov 10, Noon PDT, NWAAC Clubhouse  
 Scappoose Industrial Airport (OR)  
 Jon Dailey: [jon@sportcopter.com](mailto:jon@sportcopter.com)

### Bonneville GyroFlyers (**PRA 2**)

Nov 10, 10am MDT, Airgyro Aviation  
 Spanish Fork Airport (UT)  
 Doug Barker: [president@utahrotorcraft.org](mailto:president@utahrotorcraft.org)

### Utah Rotorcraft Association

Next Members Meeting TBA  
 Next Board Meeting TBA  
 Details to Members by E-mail  
[info@utahrotorcraft.org](mailto:info@utahrotorcraft.org)



## 2013 Calendar

Thursdays, Jan 10 - Feb 28  
[PRA Online Ground School](#)

Thu-Sun, Jan 17-20 (FL)  
[US Sport Aviation Expo](#)

Wed-Sun, Apr 17-20 (FL)  
[Bensen Days](#)

Fri-Sat, May 17-18 (AZ)  
[ARC Gyro Buddy Camp-Out](#)

Thu-Sat, Jun 6-8 (UT)  
[Rotors Over The Rockies](#)

Mon-Sun, Jul 29 - Aug 4 (WI)  
[EAA AirVenture/Oshkosh](#)

Tue-Sat, Aug 6-10 (IN)  
[PRA Convention & Fly-In](#)

Fri-Sun, Sep 13-15 (CO)  
[CO Rotorcraft Assoc. Fly-In](#)

Fri-Sun, Sep 27-29, (CA)  
[50th Anniv. Ken Brock Freedom Fly-In](#)

**This Month in WR** - Chapter news, 3-10; From the Forum, 4; ARC El Mirage Report, 8; cover story, 11; Classifieds, 12.

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## What Mentoring Looks Like

Paul Plack, Editor



On the [Rotary Wing Forum](#) recently Peter Dean, a British pilot who flies a Bensen/Merlin, raised the issue of the average age of participants in our sport. He notes that when we finally get too old to fly anymore (or taxi on to that great pilot lounge in the sky) much institutional knowledge may be lost. In his post he writes, "I just get worried that knowledge, skills, instructors and licensed pilots will dwindle to nothing with a very small voice to prevent heavy legislation. Maybe the sport will eventually disappear unless something is done. Maybe we need another James Bond film. Any thought on passing the knowledge on or encouraging the youth?"

The first few reactions posted included observations that gyroplanes don't seem to attract youth, but more often people over age 40. Regardless of when people become interested, the issue of where they turn for knowledge remains difficult. There are good helicopter flight schools in many parts of the country, but for gyroplane enthusiasts there is no continuing education course or FAA Part 141 flight school. The knowledge gap is especially wide in the areas of design, construction and maintenance.

I recently got an e-mail from a PRA member who asked, "Would you have recommendations for 'hands-on' training in the mechanics of gyros (building & maintenance)? I would like to spend whatever time is necessary to develop the knowledge and expertise to pursue my interest." This member lives in Massachusetts, where options for hands-on training are non-existent.

## Rotary Wing Forum

A Meeting Place for Rotorheads

The internet has become the chief resource for most people seeking information about gyroplanes, especially Todd Powell's [Rotary Wing Forum](#). But a newcomer has to learn quickly to filter the information on the forum and figure out what's legitimate. And the question remains - How do you get 'hands-on' exposure to building and maintenance?

For most of us, the answer is our local PRA chapters and, to a lesser extent, EAA chapters. Major gyroplane fly-ins also fill the bill. These are the places where you can see homebuilt gyros up-close and flying, ask builders the reasons behind their design



and construction choices, perhaps get an intro flight, and find out what is needed to safely care for these machines.

This segues to the topic of mentoring. What is a mentor? Dictionaries agree on some variation of "a wise and trusted counselor or teacher." We usually associate the term with organized business or charity programs. But most of the mentoring that takes place in our sport is informal, even accidental. You've probably been on both the giving and receiving side, without even knowing it.

Doug Barker looked around Utah in 2007 and saw no active PRA chapter for hundreds of miles. So, he started [Chapter 2](#). Of five charter members, only one had a gyro. Over five years, Chapter 2 established a beachhead in the Intermountain West, there are now several flying gyros in the Salt Lake City area, and Doug sits on the PRA board. This all happened because Doug was willing to become a mentor.

With apologies to Jeff Foxworthy, you may be a mentor if, at a chapter meeting or fly-in, you...

- Talk to bystanders about your gyro build
- Explain how you chose a machine
- Share flight experiences, good or bad
- Ask a question which makes someone rethink an assumption

It has been said, "If you want to fly gyroplanes, you really have to want it bad." I would add, "If you fly a gyro and want friends to fly with, you have to work to make it happen."

Are you ready to be a mentor?

Fly Safe!

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Paul".



Welcome to...

## Ken Brock PRA Chapter 1 of Southern California



### October 13 Meeting Report

The [Chapter 1](#) meeting was called to order at 11:00am by President Terry Smith. Also present at the meeting were Dee, Karen, Richard, Doug, Wbaldo, Ted, Tony and Dejan. Terry said he felt the fly-in was a great success this year and other members felt the same. Wbaldo said he was hoping we would have had the gyro glider going at the fly-in like last year. Terry said that Peter was sick and we didn't have many people to help with towing the glider. He hopes that next year we will be able to have it on the lake bed and use it.

We talked about different things to do for the upcoming 50th Anniversary, such as having something on both sides of the T-shirt, having a different color, a pocket or long sleeve. Ted asked Terry to bring his PRA t-shirt for us to get some ideas. We talked about having a picture of Ken Brock on the t-shirt next year. It was suggested that we have music next year during the fly-in, and we even talked about showing a movie after Friday night bbq.

We also talked about getting patches made. Karen had purchased two patches from Chapter 20. She contacted Rudy and he sent her the information of where they had purchased the patches.

Members thought the hamburger bbq went very well and everyone seemed to enjoy it. But everyone missed Brandon and his steak dinner.

Terry said he was going to re-do the Pilot Sign-In

Sheet so it isn't so long. There is information on the form that isn't needed. He said he was also going to modify the flyer for next year. Ted said that on the flyer we need to put a phone number and/or e-mail for contact information.

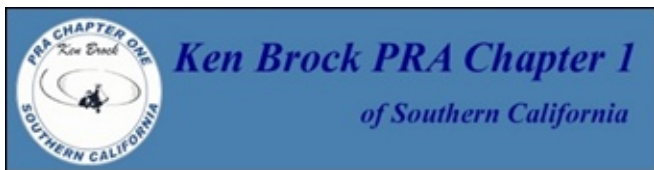
Richard mentioned that we need to let pilots know the pattern that they need to fly. Next year since he is Safety Officer we would walk around and let everyone know. We also need to involve everyone in the fly-in no matter what they are flying. Letting them know they are welcome at the fly-in and invite them to the BBQs and also award/raffle ceremony.

We all thanked Wbaldo for bring his refrigerated semi! We were able to put a lot in it and also only had to make one trip to the camp site and one trip back to Ted's with all the items we used for the fly-in.

Terry said he would get a hold of Peter and see if he is available at next month's meeting so we can take the gyro glider onto the lakebed (weather permitting). Said he would send out an e-mail once he found out something. It would be a great way to end the year. (Note: Chapter 1 will be having its Nov. meeting on the 17th, at 7am for gyro glider use – watch the Chapter 1 website for any updates!)

Finally, Terry let us know he wouldn't be here for February's 2013 meeting as he is going to have hip surgery in January.

Terry motioned the meeting be adjourned and he would start the BBQ. Richard seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 12:10pm.



## Secretary/Treasurer's Message

I would like to thank everyone from Chapter 1 and others who helped make this fly-in a great success. Pat Richey helped with T-shirt and raffle tickets and Kevin donated many items for the raffle.

Ed was unable to attend as she was quite sick but she donated a lot of beautiful earrings she made. Patti Wilson (member Dave Wilson's wife) donated three beautiful baskets for the raffle with Space Shuttle items in them.

T-Shirts are still available for \$15 each and \$5 shipping. We have left one medium, and quite a few large and X-large shirts. Please contact me at justmek2k@gmail.com.

Chapter 1 dues (\$25) is due in December. Check/money order payable to:

Popular Rotorcraft Assoc. Chapter 1

Mail to: Karen Keene, P.O. Box 1752,  
Westminster, CA 92684-1752



## From the Rotary Wing Forum

Jon Carleton has posted [video](#) (above) shot at the Wrens fly-in last month. Enjoy 17+ minutes!

Jake at Airgyro shared [video](#) of a student's first flights in the Windryder after training at Spanish Fork, UT with CFI Mike Burton. This machine is actually a rare McCutchen prototype, not one of the production versions.



The Sommerset (Kentucky) Police Department was one of the agencies which participated in a test, sponsored by the US Department of Justice, of non-traditional aircraft for law enforcement work. When that 90-day trial ended, the department lost the use of its leased Magni M24 Orion.

But the gyro must have made an impression. The department has, with help from two other agencies and \$13,000 in seized drug assets, bought an AutoGyro Calidus to keep its fledgling program aloft. They also covered it with some really sharp-looking graphics! (Photo above by David Morris on the rotary Wing Forum.)

Read details in the [Sommerset Commonwealth Journal](#), and follow the discussion using [this link](#).



The Mini 500 Helicopter is always a controversial topic, but a well-moderated thread on the forum is serving owners needing help with common issues while editing the hostile posturing. Find it [here](#).



## **Bonneville GyroFlyers PRA Chapter 2 October 13 Meeting Report**

Attendees arrived to find a Boy Scout aviation camp-out underway at [Brigham City Airport](#). The boys seemed excited despite having camped in a rainstorm with an overnight low of 45°F, and heavy, low clouds (above). It was observed that the large, city-owned hangar which has been the recent home of Rotors Over The Rockies now has tenants in the office section, a potential conflict for the 2013 event.

[Chapter 2](#)'s meeting was called to order at 10:10am MDT by President Doug Barker. Also in attendance were Secretary Paul Plack, Interim Treasurer Steve Pearson, and members Lyle Carson and Curtis Lund. The minutes of the September 8 meeting were approved as published in the October issue of Western Rotorcraft. Doug reported a balance in the treasury of \$156. The report was approved.

Nominations for treasurer were opened. Doug nominated Interim Treasurer Steve Pearson for the office. With no other names proposed, nominations were closed, a vote called, and Steve was elected by acclamation to serve through the next regular election in July, 2013.

As members shared updates on their recent and upcoming building, training and flying activities, a lively discussion took place on the topic of getting and staying motivated from the start of interest in the sport until circumstances allow reaching goals. Paul noted that involvement in PRA and two of its chapters had contributed greatly to his knowledge of the sport and available gyroplane options. Steve added that starting new phases, such as beginning construction of his gyro or starting PRA's online ground school, usually triggered bursts of progress. Lyle noted that he did not look forward to rebuilding his Air Command gyro, but now looks back on the process as enjoyable. Doug commented that attendance at events kept him motivated through



periods when progress seemed difficult. He also noted that helping manage the line for rides in Vance Breese's Predator at El Mirage introduced him to many new people. Curtis credited involvement with Chapter 2, reading of WR, and watching Airgyro's series of training videos on YouTube for keeping his interest high. (Above, Curtis Lund, Steve Pearson, Doug Barker.)

That discussion opened the door to the topic of the 2013 event calendar, and which events should be a focus of organized chapter outings. Paul suggested the possibility of a two-day trip to Oregon including a visit to the [Evergreen Aviation & Space Museum](#) to see the "Spruce Goose" on Friday, April 12 with attendance at [Chapter 73](#)'s anniversary BBQ and a tour of [Sport Copter](#) on Saturday, April 13.

Rotors Over The Rockies will be June 6-8. The informal Alvord dry lake fly-in (Oregon) held in 2012 seems likely to happen over the four-day weekend of July 4-7 in 2013. With only four Saturdays in September of 2013, it is possible the 50th Anniversary Ken Brock Freedom Fly-In will fall on the same weekend as the Wendover Wheels & Wings event. Curtis suggested that we might be able to have gyroplanes at Wendover even if part of the group is at El Mirage.



Upcoming meetings and winter webinars were discussed. It was decided to meet November 10 in Spanish Fork, UT to see the new Calidus and MTO Sport gyroplanes arriving at [Airgyro](#), and to plan a Christmas party in December.

Winter webinar topics of interest to members in 2013 include an update on the ArrowCopter, a program on the building of Sport Rotors, a map of steps required to learn to fly a gyroplane from CFI Mike Burton, and a presentation of the Autogyro quick-build program from Airgyro.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10am, followed by presentation of photos from El Mirage. As attendees were leaving, a Stearman biplane (above) from the [Commemorative Air Force wing in Heber, UT](#) was available for rides in connection with the Boy Scout event. (Paul Plack, Secretary)



## **San Diego Rotorcraft Club PRA Chapter 31 Member Notes**

**To our new members** - Here is the link to our co-ownership agreement and presentation that will explain so much more:

<http://www.pra31.org/Co-ownership.aspx>

Got an email from Bruce regarding his Little Wing. Turns out it will not be here until Summer, so those wishing to share hanger space at KSEE in El Cajon or ??? keep this date in mind. We expect to be boxing the Lycoming up for shipping to to Aviomania Aircraft in Cypress. (John Rountree)

*Above - Lycoming engine showing three mounting brackets which need to be fabricated before shipping Chapter 31's O-320 to Cyprus, where it will be fitted to the chapter's new Aviomania [Genesis Duo](#) trainer.*



*CFI Mike Burton is putting the finishing touches on this SparrowHawk (above) at Airgyro. Go Mike go!*



## **Arizona Rotorcraft Club October 20 Meeting Report**

(San Manuel Ray Blair Airport) - Members present: President Carl Matter, Sec/Treasurer Mark Rhoads, VP Marvin Wessel, Sarah Wessel, Britta Penca, Mike Sutherland, Michael Willet, Albert Bright, Greg Egolf, Teresa Egolf. Marvin and Sarah Wessel flew their new Sport Copter II from Chandler, AZ. Al Bright flew in to the meeting with a friend in a 172. Guests: Dick Simonis, Jim Egolf, Israel and Virginia Serr.

Introduction of guests: Dick's background is in SECA racing (Riverside and Oakland, CA). He remembers seeing gyroplanes at or around these events, and has resolved to write an action/adventure fiction novel about gyroplanes. His work is at a standstill because of his lack of understanding about gyroplanes. His intent is to attend [Chapter 15](#) events to gain more knowledge to ensure that his writing is technically correct. All members were intrigued by his efforts, and are more than willing to help him with his quest.

Israel and Virginia are from New Mexico/Tucson. This is his second trip to a Chapter 15 meeting. Israel notes that he is serious about getting into gyros and would like to start training, and purchase a machine as soon as he can.

Business: Carl talked about a club initiative to promote gyroplanes and Chapter 15 using business cards for Chapter 15 members to hand out. A

discussion was held and members were in favor. The vote to purchase business cards was unanimous -in favor of the motion.

President Carl introduced an idea for posting a YouTube video and linking it to the Chapter 15 website. Carl has made a sample video that he showed at the meeting.

All members were impressed. Marvin offered to make more videos for the website. Links both ways - YouTube to Chapter 15 and vice versa - will be established. A unanimous vote (in favor) was held to post Carl's video and others created by Marvin.

## **Meetings & Events 2012-2013**

November 17, 11 AM -Coolidge Airport camping area.

December 15 - 1pm Christmas party with snacks at Mark and Britta's house in Oracle (note new address 549 N Oak Hills Place, Oracle, AZ, 85623, phone 520-840-0186 or 520-840-0951). Christmas gift exchange to be held - White Reindeer Yankee Swap - Please wrap the gift, and spend no more than \$10. Used or handmade made items OK. Transportation from the airport will be arranged. (*Cont' next page.*)

Arizona Rotorcraft Club



PRA Chapter 15



Please call ahead if wanting/need a ride.

January 12 – 10 AM -Club fly-out from San Manuel to Bensen for lunch.

January 19 – 11 AM, Stellar Airpark, (209 South Stellar Parkway, Chandler, AZ) – Meeting and club furnished lunch to be held at Marvin and Sarah's house (100 South Stellar Parkway – phone – 480-814-1393).

February 16 (tentative) – 11 AM - Meeting/flying event to be held in Yuma, AZ.

March 16 – 11 AM – Meeting and lunch to be held at the Avra Valley airport restaurant in Marana, AZ. Members are encouraged to fly-in. Weekend camping is available one mile from the airport at Albert's residence/"my mechanic shop" – 1 Wong Way – look for two very large grain bins.

April 20 - 11AM meeting – Coolidge airport camping area, Annual Dinner at 5 PM. Members encouraged to campout/fly-in. We will plan to barbeque chicken and steak. The club will provide meat, drinks, potato salad and chips.

May 17 – 18 Gyro Buddy Camp-in/Fly-out to be held at the San Manuel airport.

June, July, August – the club is idled down for the summer. Members are encouraged to attend Rotors Over the Rockies in June.

Guests are welcomed and encouraged to attend any or all of the above meetings/events.

New business: Election of officers will take place in January. All members are encouraged to run for office, or make nominations on or before the November meeting. (*Mark Rhoads, Sec'y/Treas.*)

There were at least nine Chapter 15 members at the Copperstate air show in October. There was everything from powered parachutes to a B-24 Liberator. Photo (top of page 8) is club Vice-President Marv Wessel and wife Sarah with their award winning Sport Copter II. They should get a second award for answering about a million questions about gyros. Marv enjoys flying for fun and also uses it for law enforcement and search and rescue. He promotes a nice positive image for our sport, thanks Marv.

## **Chapter 15 - El Mirage Report** **Carl Matter, President**

A good time was had by almost everyone at El Mirage. There was one small incident on Sunday but looking back it could have been much worse. A new gyro was being tested when it went out of control, tipped left, and tore itself apart on the lakebed.



Luckily the pilot was able to walk away. I have since heard from Jake (above) and he has identified the design problem and will be back next year with a new gyro. He recommends having another set of eyes look over your work. I am glad he will continue working towards his goal of flight. Hang in there Jake, I'll be looking for that unique blue exhaust system next September.

I heard from both Teddy and Jake that the shoulder harness seat belts they have really help prevent further injuries in a crash. They keep you from flopping around much better than a lap belt and hold you in the safe area next to the mast. I will be going down to the hot rod shop soon to look at those 5-point seat belts.



Speaking of big hats, one of our Yuma members left the ground at El Mirage in his very own Sport Copter. Doug Goodman (above, wearing the cowboy hat) and his charming wife Linda made the trip over from Yuma AZ to take advantage of the 360 degree runway on the lakebed. His local coach Ben Suisa was there for advice and support. Linda waited patiently while Doug flew for the first time on his own. When he returned safely there were big smiles



all around. Congratulations Doug!

It was a good turnout for Sport Copter with lots of examples at the fly-in. Walt George (above) brought out his new machine. It is a Vortex M912. The M stands for "mustering" and means it comes with extended shocks, turf tires and extra fuel tanks for long range. I asked how it compared to flying his two-seat RAF. He replied, "that was a Mercedes sedan and this is a Porsche, it's much better for fancy flying, tight turns and low level stuff." Sounds like you're having fun with it Walt.



Al Bright gave lots of rides in his PPG. I went up along with Britta, the Springer girls Linda and Lonnie and even Hong. Everyone had fun and some are considering getting one of their own. I can't think of a better sales technique than a flight with Al. (Above, F-B: Carl Matter, Al Bright.)

Mark Sanders was there with his Sparrowhawk. He did a lot of flying around the lake bed and also participated in a group fly over to the Victorville

airport. They received special permission to land there and I heard it was a fun trip.

One of the funniest times for me was the last night when Al got his hands on some fireworks. (thanks Jeff). You would think the middle of a dry lake bed would be the safest place ever for a sparkly display. And that was true until it drew the attention of Mark Sanders. Like a moth he ran to the lights and daringly jumped back and forth over the small flaming can. Then he reached down and grabbed it with his right hand, held it high in the air and stood there like the Statue of Liberty. It was hilarious.



(Above: Mark Sanders with his SparrowHawk)

After that Al lit a roman candle, but it fell over and shot across the surface of the lakebed, until Mark grabbed it and held it upright. You can probably guess what came next. Roman Candles at twenty paces. Great balls of fire shot through the air. Al was a better shot but since he foolishly lit Mark's weapon first the next shot was a direct hit on Al and therefore Mark got the win.

They shot back and forth, and not knowing exactly when the colored balls would launch there was a lot of dancing around, with the shooting arm outstretched, head down and eyes squinted. The balls shot back and forth like a game of tennis. Whoosh and yelp, whoosh and yelp. I laughed so hard I almost fell off my bicycle. They were both nervously still standing at the end. Al, with a souvenir hole in his shirt for winning the rare distinction of second place at a duel.

Next year is the 50th anniversary of the KBFF so start planning now to attend the big event. Contact Chapter 1 if you have any ideas to make it even more special.

If you have any amusing, interesting or informative gyro stories from El Mirage or anywhere else please send them to me so I can share them in the newsletter.



# CRA

**Colorado Rotorcraft Association**

## October Report

The Colorado Rotorcraft Association (PRA [Chapter 38](#)) held its second [fly-in event](#) of 2012 on Saturday, October 13. The morning started with a pancake breakfast provided by members of EAA Chapter 72.

The north tie down area of Meadow Lake Airport next to the Airport Operations and Maintenance hangar was reserved for rotorcraft. PRA 38 provided a coned-off area for rotor spin-down separated from the spectators. Rotorcraft filled the balance of the north area. Bruce McCombs displayed his two-seat Little Wing, Frank Nelson had his two-place Barnett, Dick Dougherty displayed his GyroBee with the folding mast, Todd Rieck displayed and demonstrated his modified Air Command and Thomas Fernandez displayed and demonstrated his GyroBee with the 582 Rotax.

Both Todd and Thomas made very slow passes into an increasing North wind that looked to the crowd watching like the gyros were flying in slow motion.

Our next Fly in event will be September 13-14-15th 2013. (Mark Shook, Pres.)

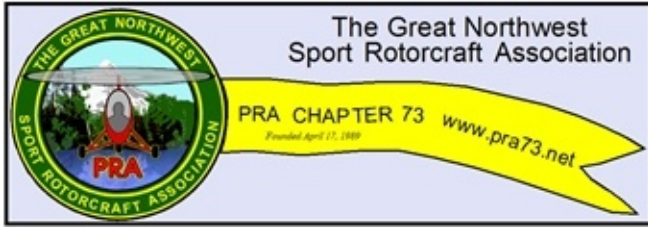
Video is now available of Cobus Burger's September presentation on the Phenix tractor autogyro in three segments on Youtube, at these links: [\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#) [\[3\]](#)

**Western Rotorcraft**



Top of page, L-R: Frank Nelson's Barnett; Todd Rieck's black Air Command with Yamaha power, Dick Dougherty's GyroBee.

Top of column: Thomas Fernandez flies his GyroBee over Meadow Lake Airport. Above: Bruce McCombs taxis for takeoff in his Little Wing tractor gyro. (Photos: Mark Shook)



## October 13 Meeting Report

[Chapter 73's](#) meeting was called to order at 1:18pm. Board members present: Jon Dailey, President; Bob Johnson, Treasurer; and Richard Ecker, Secretary. Approximately eight members/visitors present.

Jon announced that Clint donated a large framed photo of Amelia Earhart's Pitcairn gyro. It was auctioned off and Gary Powell is now the proud owner. Thanks to Clint and Gillan for their monetary donations also.

Jon asked the members to approve the minutes from last month's meeting. They were approved. Bob gave our Treasurer's report for the club.

We discussed our club's presence in Western Rotorcraft Magazine. If you have something gyro-related for sale, email Jon ([jon@sportcopter.com](mailto:jon@sportcopter.com)) and he will submit to the magazine and post it on our website.

Member's project updates: Gillan's gyro is now airworthy and working on engine run-ups. Kevin now has a Yamaha powered Vortex that is approximately 100 HP. He's thinking about selling his 503 Lightning or converting it to be powered by a rotary engine.

Old Business: No old business.

New Business: Kevin suggested that we should go down to the [Alvord Desert](#). It is a great place to fly, as the desert is 12-x-7 miles in size. It is much larger than El Mirage, and it is only 4-6 hours south from Portland. The club down by El Mirage told Kevin they would like to join us there if we go. The club in Boise is less than 100 miles from Alvord. We should invite them also.

Our next meeting will be at NWAAC again. Our next raffle will be a Winchester single-shot 22 cal. rifle.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:56pm. Thanks to the NWAAC for letting us use their clubhouse for our meeting. (*Richard Ecker, Secretary.*)



Above: Alvord Desert fly-in, July 2012.

Below: Pitcairn gyro photo.



SEE WHAT'S NEW AT SPORT COPTER!

## My First Gyro Flight

Marc Perry

Recently, I had my first flight in an autogyro and was asked to give my thoughts. I have always loved aviation and have been near it my entire life.



My father was a company pilot for Hatch River Expeditions, so, as a kid I spent a good deal of time in the cockpit of a Cessna 182 over the magnificent southwest. After military service and a few years working, I decided to pursue my love of aviation obtaining my private, instrument, and commercial helicopter licenses flying in R-22 aircraft. I am also a licensed A&P mechanic from Clover Park Technical College where I work as an assistant in the Aviation Maintenance degree program.

To help you appreciate my experience of gyro flight, a little background about the R-22 may be in order. To me, the R-22 is like a Ferrari, only one that flies! Okay, a Ferrari will drive more than twice as fast as the Vne of an R-22, but, in my opinion, flying more than makes up for that. The maneuverability of the R-22 is amazing, as is the view. Plus, you can do things in a helicopter that you cannot do in an airplane. Steep approaches to pinnacle landings on hill tops, landing on small gravel bars (10-x-10') in the middle of a river, or simply hovering stationary and enjoying the view, all are out of reach to an airplane pilot. In a helicopter I feel like a super hero with the power of flight.

The FAA has a Special FAR ([SFAR 73](#)) concerning R-22 and R-44 aircraft that requires a safety briefing before any control manipulation by a student, among other things. The Robinson helicopter is a fantastic product but it does require some specialized instruction due to its design characteristics (no low-G pushover, for example). In particular, the R-22 has a low inertia rotor system that can undergo rapid RPM changes if incorrect control inputs are used during auto-rotations. These things keep a vigilant pilot on the edge of his seat when flying this aircraft.

Enter the Sport Copter trainer (at top right). At the local PRA chapter meeting the opportunity arose for anyone interested to take a flight in the two-place tandem machine. I jumped at the chance, as I am currently building a gyro, but had not yet been flying in one! Jim Vanek, the owner of Sport Copter, was kind enough to bring their trainer over for the flights.

After an aircraft walk-around and safety briefing, I was strapped into the front seat and eager to begin our flight. The weather was high overcast with some chance of rain, with temperature in the 60's. A jacket and flight helmet with headset was all that was



needed for the open cockpit flight. I was quite excited to experience gyro flight at long last.

After lining up and a short pre-rotation, smooth addition of partial throttle got us accelerating down the runway. As the nose began to lift, forward stick was added to keep the nose from rising further, and the rest of the power was added in. We accelerated in low level flight to 45 mph and began our climb straight out. The climb performance was as expected in a rotorcraft, and we were soon at our pattern altitude. My first impression was exhilaration at the feeling of being 500 feet in the air with nothing around me. I had felt this way once before when I did a tandem skydive in Florida, but that only lasted about 60 seconds. This kept on going; the joy of the wind in my face was awesome.

We proceeded to the nearby practice area where Jim gave me the controls for the first time. We were over a nice level field and I put the gyro into a left bank. A little rudder helped keep the aircraft in trim and accelerate the turn, something different from a helicopter that requires no coordinating pedal. This was not unnatural however, and the control response was smooth and intuitive. Jim mentioned that I didn't have to be quite so gentle on the controls, this was not a helicopter. To demonstrate what he meant, he took the controls and gave large control inputs in pitch and roll, with the gyro responding by wobbling very serenely like a pendulum. The same control input in a helicopter very likely would cause mast bumping or the blades to intersect the tailcone. I was impressed!

With that demonstration, I took the controls back and began to maneuver the aircraft with confidence. The amazing thing that I noticed after about 20 minutes of climbs, descents, slow flight and maneuvering was that as exhilarating as this flying was, it was oddly peaceful as well. Always in the back of my mind flying an R-22 I was thinking of the possibility of the

engine quitting and the possibility of a forced autorotation to landing. But the gyro is always in autorotation, so there is no required transition if the engine should fail. As if to demonstrate his ability to read my mind, Jim took us back toward the airport to demonstrate a landing, and then he let me take the controls for a trip through the pattern.

On downwind at pattern altitude we were diligently looking for traffic that was nearing our position from the direction of an approaching storm. I imagine that a gyro might be a hard target to spot to someone who has not seen one regularly. At a 45 degree angle to the runway we reduced power and began a turn to base. The flight attitude should be familiar to anyone with helicopter experience, a bit steeper than a fixed wing approach. As we rolled onto final, we pitched forward to increase our airspeed from 45 to 55-60 mph. Over the numbers we were a few feet off the runway and I began our flare for landing. Here Jim reminded me that we were not in a helicopter and that I couldn't land like I was in one successfully, so I decided to heed his warning and add power. We leveled off about three feet off the runway and flew along nice and stable in ground effect. I had tried to land like I was in an R-22 at the end of an autorotation, where you can pull the collective and use the rotor RPM to arrest the descent of the helicopter the last few feet. You can't do that in a gyro, but a small reduction in power brought us gently to earth.

We spent a few more minutes flying along the taxi way in a hover taxi while Jim demonstrated various landing techniques available to a gyro pilot. We concluded the flight and taxied over to the clubhouse. As I got off the gyro, my family was waiting for me and they took delight in the bugs that were plastered to my face and glasses. I had felt little stings while flying and had thought it was rain, but it must have been gnats. I was so elated after the amazing flight that I threatened to not wash my glasses so I could show the students in the Aviation Maintenance program where I work what real aviation fun is like!

In all seriousness, that flight was the most fun that I have had since I got to take the controls of a UH-1 Huey for the first time. And being that a Huey costs millions of dollars to buy and thousands of dollars per hour to operate, I have to give the gyro the position as the most amazing flying experience I have ever had! I fell in love with the simplicity, safety, performance, and sheer aviating fun that is the autogyro. I extend my sincere thanks for this opportunity to PRA chapter 73 and to Sport Copter. I encourage anyone that loves aviation or has flying in their blood to contact your local Popular Rotorcraft Association chapter to find out when their next meeting is. You will meet interesting people who share your love of aviation, and you never know, you just might get a ride, too!

## Gyroplanes For Sale



**BENSEN GYROCOPTER** - Bensen blades. Brock landing gear, joystick, 8-gal. seat tank. Subaru EA-81 twin-carb, converted to single Holly 1920 carb, direct drive. Some gauges, radiator. No prop. \$4,000 or may trade for an original British Mini car. Bill Yule, acecrenshaw@gmail.com, Tucson. (AZ, 11/12)



**GYROBEE** - Built & hang-tested, registered, needs airworthiness inspection, many construction photos available. New Rotax 503 near zero time broken in and taxied. Power fin prop, 23' Dragon Wing rotorblades and head, gauges, radio, more. \$12,995. Frank Dicorte, (254) 715-3056. (TX, 11/12)

**RAF 2000 GTX-SE-FI** - 160 hours TT. Completed in 2009 with GBA CLT conversion and tall tail. Subaru 2.2L, Becker radio & transponder, recent annual, logs in order. \$49,300 includes 20 hours dual instruction. Curt, (435) 730-0828. (UT, 12/11)

## Engines for Sale

**ENGINES:** Subaru EJ 22, \$350; EJ 22 block complete, \$200; EA82 block complete, \$200; Geo 3-cylinder with prop and gear reduction, \$1500. (623) 386-7043, [las2280@qwest.net](mailto:las2280@qwest.net). (AZ, 2/12)

## Wanted to Buy

**Mini 500 helicopter tail rotor blades.**  
Please contact Hong, [alphawheels@yahoo.com](mailto:alphawheels@yahoo.com).

*Classified ads in Western Rotorcraft are available free to members of any participating PRA chapter. Contact your chapter (see page 2) for details.*