

THE FLYER

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Chapter Meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month at the Sport Aviation Center, 3600 Wildwood Ave., Jackson, MI 49202-1811 unless otherwise published....Everyone is welcome, bring a friend and we'll do our best to welcome them.

This month's meeting will be Wednesday, September 3 at 7:30 PM. The Board will typically meet one hour earlier. You are welcome to attend and listen.

Officers:

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This Month's Contents: 1) Board Meeting Summary, 2) Member's Profile, 3) General Chapter News, 4) Pacer News, 5) Meeting Notes & Speaker, 6) Contributing Writers/Events

1. Board Meeting Notes:

The board did not meet in August in order to prepare for the club picnic. Good food and good company!

2. This month's profile is on George Race and his project:

How N73EX Came To Be, George Race

After working at Albion College for well over 35 years, retirement finally was at the end of the road, and the road was getting shorter every day. Needing something to look forward to, not just sitting and watching television, my wife Barbara suggested that maybe I could find time to do something that I have always wanted to do, get my pilots license and build an airplane. At the time, it seemed like a very big order, and one that probably would take me well into retirement.

Looking back a few years, I did start taking flying lessons in an airplane that I am sure that many of you have flown as well, N6998A, one of the Club planes at Aero Investors. It took over a year to get my 3rd class medical certificate. Seems that I had a heart stint back in 1995 and the FAA did not look favorably at that procedure. The certificate was only good for one year and the conditions were that I must have a Nuclear Stress every year, with good results, to have it reissued. Working at the College I had very good medical coverage, and having my Doctor order a yearly stress test did not seem to be a problem,

but, what will I do after retirement when I do not have that good coverage. In checking further, I found out that the testing procedure was going to be in the order of \$5000 a year.

At this point, I had about 70 hours in 98A and was ready to take my PPL exam. As I knew I would not be able to meet the cost of the yearly medical exam, I called and talked to one of the AOPA Medical Advisors, hoping there was another way to satisfy the request of the FAA for yearly examination. The answer was not something that I wanted to hear. The only thing to do was let my 3rd Medical Certificate expire and sit back and wait for something called A Sport Pilot License to come about, and I was advised it would be less than a year before it was available. Had I known then what I know now, I would have finished my PPL and eventually been able to fly under the Sport Pilot Rules. At that time, they were still quite unclear as to how it was all going to work. I got discouraged, resigned from Aero Investors and buried myself in my last few years of work at Albion College.

Now lets fast forward again to about three years ago. The Sport Pilot License rules were finally resolved and it was indeed another way for me to get back into flying. So you see my Wife's idea of getting my license and building an airplane was probably not too far from reality. So the direction was set, and I started to try to figure out what I needed to build an airplane, and in the mean time figure out how to get one of these new Sport Pilot Licenses.

I knew the first thing I needed was a place to build an airplane, and it was not going to be in the basement or recreation room. OK, so let's build a pole barn. It could be the hangar and work shop, as well as a place to store a lot of stuff that has been over filling the garage and recreation room for years. You know lawn mowers, snow blowers, lawn rollers, and boxes full of stuff you just don't want to throw away.

With retirement less than 2 years away, and the time coming when extra funds would be more difficult to come up with, it was time to get started. That summer I built a 30 X 40 pole barn, divided off the back 16 feet into a work shop, and moved all the junk out of the house and garage to a "better" place. Phase I was completed!

Now, over the winter I needed to decide what airplane I wanted to build, and start looking for a place that was teaching Sport Pilot classes. After a lot of looking, I decided that I wanted to build a "Low and Slow" Zenith STOL CH701. It looked just exactly like something you could fly from your own back yard, and I had about 10 acres of back yard to play in. Spring came and I made arrangements to take a test flight at the Zenith factory in Mexico, MO. About an hour in the airplane was all it took to convince me this was the airplane I was looking for. With a take off run of about 65 feet, with two on board, and a power on stall that never happened, the plane just hung there and stopped moving. Yes, I looked down and the ground was standing still beneath us! But the move that really sealed the deal for me was the landing roll out of about 100 feet or so. Here was an airplane that I COULD actually fly from the back yard. I ordered the tail kit, and was told it would be shipped in about 3 months.

Now it was time to find a place to train and fly. No matter where I looked or called the discouraging answer was always "no, we don't have a Sport Pilot airplane and don't plan on having one in the near future." In searching on the Web, I found out that there was

going to be a Sport Pilot school starting up at the Three Rivers Airport in a few months. A call to Destination Flight Service confirmed that they were waiting to buy an airplane and my name was added to the list of available Students.

Now it was time to do some book work. I'd already finished the Sporty's PPL course on DVD some time back, so I was now looking for the same material for Sport Pilot. I discovered that there was a concentrated three day course being offered down in Indiana that was the exam prep for the FAA Written Exam. Signing up, got the material and spent the three days cramming for the exam along with about 20 other hopefuls at "Hop's Airport" flying shop and school in Walkerton, IN. Eventually I took and passed the written exam at the FBO in Charlotte, MI.

The tail kit arrived and the airplane building began. Almost immediately I realized that I had better get the rest of the kit ordered, as I discovered there was at least a 3 month delay on delivery, and the engine that I wanted was about 6 months away, having to come all the way from Australia.

A few months later I got a call from Robin, at Destination Flight. They had a Sport Airplane and there was just not enough time to get all of those on the list flying. But, they would let me know when a slot became available. A few months went by, the airplane building was coming right along, and even the engine had arrived. It was now time to start the flight training in the Sport Plane at Destination Flight.

Getting used to a very light weight airplane took a few hours. I found they do not like to flair and continue flying, but rather stall easily with power off and any nose high attitude. Yes, it is very easy to drop it out of the air from what you think would be a normal flare height for a 172. You soon learn to fly it until the mains are ready to touch the runway. A few hours and I was signed off to solo. Practicing at least once a week I was soon ready for the oral and flight exam. On September 19th 2007 I officially became a licensed Sport Pilot. Doing over a hundred soft and short field landing and take offs I hope has prepared me for what is to come when I start flying from my own back yard.

Almost three years since I decided to build my own airplane, I will soon be flying it out of my back yard. Oh yes, along the way I built and groomed a grass strip in the back yard. It is very big for this airplane, don't laugh, 550 X 50 feet!

I will not go into all the details and fun I have had building N73EX. I have shared the pictures of my project with many of you at our monthly EAA meetings, these past couple of years. Your encouragement and complements have been very rewarding and I appreciate all the help, suggestions, and comments so many of you have made along the way.

One last thing, I invite each and every one of you to give me a call, stop by and visit and let me show off what three years of work can lead to, a very beautiful little airplane that will fly "Low and Slow" and give many hours of enjoyment, both in the building and flying.

Today, July 17th 2008, N73EX became an airworthy airplane. My FAA inspection came off without a hitch. My personal thanks to Rick Anderson, FAA Inspector, for all the kind words about my airplane building project. Now you know my story, and the way that N73EX came to be.

Editor's note: Check out the many pictures of George's plane, which can be seen on his website: <http://www.mrrace.com/mykitairplane/MyCH701>



Office Suite-Note joystick for real pilots!



Good lookin', ain't she!



First Takeoff



First Landing!

3. General Chapter News:

To all of you currently building a project, please tell us about your project's progress on the chapter website. Your fellow members would love to hear how you are coming along. That, and other posted information, will also help our Newsletter Editor (Steve) find things to include in the monthly newsletter. If you have any questions or have any trouble signing in to use that part of the site, call Jim or email him at jimbuist@yahoo.com.

When next you visit please notice and appreciate all the members' hard work cleaning the T-33 canopy and installing a permanent pilot with my old Air Force helmet and oxygen mask. A fitting resting place for it.

4. Pacer Project News:

Only a small amount of taping remains. At September's meeting, we will move the wings out of the Sport Aviation Center museum to the work room to finish the taping. I expect we will resume meeting each Thursday from 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM or so, and again on Saturday and Sunday mornings to work on the project. I can use a change in scenery; we need to dilute this bunch of geezers with some fresh clean smiling faces.

5. Meeting Notes & Speaker:

As of this writing I'm not aware of a speaker, however, Earl may be persuaded to do a song and dance for us.

6. Contributing Writers/Events:

Nobody met our high standards for literature this month -- if you believe that lets meet and talk about this bridge you can get real cheap.....Actually, a big thanks to George Race for his "Member Profile" article. Congratulations on completing your project, a job well done!