

The Prop Wash

A Monthly Publication of the Indianapolis Aero Club

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From the President

Let's Take Her Back To The Hanger

If you fly long enough, you will have a moment that makes your palms sweat. Whether the plane breaks or you do something that you maybe should not have done, you will have that moment. Over the years I flew, I had a few of those, two alternator failures, a landing gear light out, and a center of gravity issue that almost put me and an Arrow IV into the ground. But the one I remember most clearly is my first.

While I lived in Ohio, I flew out of Youngstown Municipal Airport, YNG back in the day, now KYNG, I guess. Youngstown had a civilian side and a military side with an air reserve base in those days filled with C-130s, which meant plenty of runways, an active tower, and all the instrument approaches prevalent in the late '70s. On this particular day, I was flying a Piper Archer, N1993H. My instructor's name was Chuck Lapmardo. Chuck and I flew several hundred hours together since I started flying at 14 and got to know each other. We planned to work on instrument training. I don't remember what kind of a day it was, but the hood was in hand for just after takeoff.

After a normal preflight and run-up, the tower cleared us for departure, and

I lined up on 32, which was 9000 feet long. I remember the takeoff, 93 Hotel came off the ground, as usual, I pulled until the airspeed settled on best rate of climb and my Archer reached for the sky. As I looked at my instructor expecting him to hand me the dreaded hood, the plane suddenly started to shake, and the engine sounded rough. Not just a shudder, but the plane shook like none other. I remember dropping the nose, and Chuck took the yoke and told me to let the tower know we needed to return. In reality, we hadn't even cleared the 9000 feet that 32 had to offer. Chuck had the plane, I called the tower and advised we were coming back and had a loss of power.



I was 15 or maybe 16 but remember that I felt calm and all was good, shaky but good. We entered a tight downwind, and the tower cleared us to land on any runway. Youngstown had 32/14, 5/23, and an X-d out closed runway that I honestly can't remember because it was only used to taxi. I kept the microphone in hand, and when asked told the tower we didn't think we'd need emergency gear, and we would be okay for 32. We got the plane on the ground, and when we checked power, the tachometer never cleared 2000 rpm. Chuck looked at me and smirked and said, "Why don't we take it back to the hanger." I taxied while he played with the mixture and had me cycle the mags trying to figure out what had happened. I don't remember what the issue was, but I flew 93 Hotel for many hours after that, event-free.

So what is the big deal? Was it that it happened? Was it that we didn't put the plane in the farmer's field just



south of the airport or worse? No. The big deal was that Chuck, who was ten or so years my senior, and I acted as one. We continued to fly the plane and brought it back to the hanger in one piece. As I say, when I fly radio-controlled planes, the same number of aircraft, the same number of pieces, it's been a good day.

So what does all this rambling have to do with your Aero Club? Frankly, this year has been like that flight in 93 Hotel. We just got off the ground for 2020 and had speed and momentum, climbing for another monumental year. Then, without warning and thanks to some silly, invisible, and evil malfunction in the world, we lost

power and had to return to the airport for an unplanned landing. COVID-19 may have taken power from us, but it will not keep us grounded. We will get an "all clear" someday soon, and we will take the active again. The Air Race Classic will happen again. Oshkosh, Space Camp, and Ace Academy will look to us for a scholarship recipient again. Rodney will keep cracking jokes at the podium, and some of us will laugh. The Aero Club will take off and climb out firing on all cylinders, but I don't know if the May dinner/seminar will happen—it's doubtful. The June dinner, well, let's hope we will put this behind us and get together again. We have lost some members lately and will miss them, so please keep their

families in our thoughts and prayers. In the meantime, all of us need to stay in the hanger and wait for things to get better. With all that has been broken lately, let's count our blessings and pray for those who are not as lucky as us. Most of all, let's keep working as a team, flying the plane, and looking forward to the day when we can be an active outreaching club again. For now, 93 Hotel is clear of the active and taxing to the ramp. Stay healthy, my friends!

Respectfully,

Jeff Uchino
President

FROM THE EDITOR

Everyone is tired of hearing about the virus and seeing its colorfully overused picture, so let us keep this inspirational quote in mind: "in times like these, it's good to remember that there have always been times like these."

GONE WEST

The Indianapolis Aero Club is the repository of unique and deeply interesting people. Unfortunately, we don't always know precisely how intriguing some of our members are until they are gone, such is human nature. Father John Beitans passed from this life on 4 April. His assistant notified the Club, and his fascinating obituary is posted here for your convenience. <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/indystar/obituary.aspx?pid=195905384>

We will miss seeing Father Beitans breeze into our dinner/seminars, and isn't it a shame that most of us were clueless about his background and interests. Since the Club only meets ten times a year, it is difficult to know each other better, especially when most people sit with the same friends every month. Frankly, we'd hoped the addition of the Crew Like You column

in February's Prop Wash would foment interest and camaraderie, but it generated little interest. Perhaps, then, one might consider sitting with someone different at our next dinner and see what you can learn about our eclectic group.

The Club also lost a long-time member and past president Bill Jamison, who passed away on 11 April. Bill was a doer, he was a Navy veteran and Boy Scout leader, and he devoted countless hours and talents to his other interests. <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/indystar/obituary.aspx?n=william-c-jamison&pid=195970565>

SOCIAL DISTANCING FLY-OUT

Indiana's airports remain open, and they invite you to fly in. In that spirit, the ever-resourceful Tim Sparks, author of last month's famous Flash-Fly-out, suggested a social distancing fly-out with a picnic lunch. Well, that sent us looking for a suitable venue. We were considering Alexandria, Indiana's airport, because of its rural nature, thus facilitating social distancing. However, a few of our members balked at the field's 2600 foot length.

Member Sparks finds such superstitions laughable after landing on the pitching decks of aircraft carriers. Still, if we conducted an informal poll among our members, we believe the vast majority would come down on the side of there being no such thing as a free lunch, the Easter Bunny, and too much runway.

Most of us lack carrier experience, but a few of us have landed at New York La Guardia Airport, also known as the USS La Guardia. Putting heavy Boeing 767 and MD-80 on the airport's 7000-foot runway is an attention-getter, and there's no tail-hook on those big airplanes. The other thing the USS La Guardia has in common with a carrier is those overshoot landings end up in the water. We believe Vice President Pence had some experience at La Guardia when his 737 landed long.

The aforementioned considered, Tim suggested Rough River State Park, Kentucky, as our alternate. That's an inspired choice because there is a shelter house adjacent to the 3200-foot long runway. We're working out the details now, so stay tuned to our website: www.indy-aeroclub.org for announcements. Now

that we have a destination coming up with VFR weather is the next challenge.

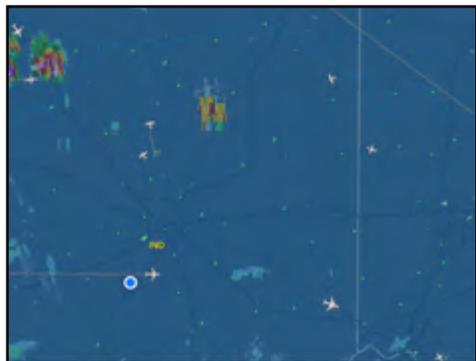
DON'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU SEE

Speaking of weather, few things send shivers up an aviator's spine quicker than thunderstorm forecasts. Having been close to a few thunderstorms, so close that the lightning and thunder were simultaneous, is no place to be. Devoted Flight Aware watchers, and who isn't, report seeing several general aviation airplanes flying directly into the maw of Indiana's particularly gnarly Midwestern variety of thunderstorms.

Who would do such a thing? Well, it turns out that there weren't any storms there at all, and here is why. There are such things as wind turbine thunderstorms. Certain weather conditions fool the weather radar into thinking it is receiving convective weather returns.

Our current radar technology is smart enough to bias out anything it considers a false weather return, but it does it by considering movement. To simplify, if the radar software sees the return energy isn't moving, then it's not really weather. The problem is that those turbine blades usually are 300 feet in diameter, more than 260 above ground level, and they move. Thus, the rotation of the blades enter the radar's line of sight and fool the software into thinking it is a thunderstorm.

Indiana has a few large wind farms like the ones at Boswell, north of Lafayette, and the Elwood area wind farm. Check out FlightAware some morning, and if the conditions are conducive, you'll see the wind turbine thunderstorms for yourself.



SEVEN DEADLY SINS

There, maybe that got your attention. Humans seem to enjoy sin, so it's good that there are only seven deadly ones which we won't list here since many of you are already familiar with a few of them. Are you tallying your score in your mind??

Here's a clue, envy is one of the seven. Most pilots have a certain kind of envy—airspeed envy. Airplanes are for going fast, and there's no such thing as going too fast unless you exceed VNE.

One of our members had an important decision to make a couple of years ago when the family Continental 0-470 strongly indicated that it wanted to retire. Nothing but praise for that engine, it flew more than six hundred hours over its Time Between Overhaul (TBO) limit. During most of its life, it was in professional hands who treated it right, and it reciprocated (pardon the pun).

During confession, our member admitted to airspeed envy on every flight.

The 0-470 is only 230 HP, so the Skylane to which it was attached only cruised about 120 KTS in no-wind. The owner could opt to rebuild the old engine, buy a rebuilt engine, or get a new 300 HP Continental IO-550. Reading from left to right, each choice required more money.

There's probably a cost/benefit formula to help with such decisions, but things like the pilot's age and other considerations cannot be easily quantified. The owner in question is a late sixties vintage, so the future looks different than to a thirty-year-old. The owner decided to go for broke, almost literally, and buy the injected 300 HP engine with a Hartzel Scimitar three-bladed propeller. Story to be continued next month.

We will keep you posted regarding the Indianapolis Aero Club May dinner/seminar, and the upcoming Social Distanting Fly-out.

Regards,
Col. (Ret.) Roscoe E. Filtcher, ATP,
Editor-In-Chief

GAS PRICES

While the price of crude oil is near zero, don't expect to get a break at the 100LL pump. The Skylane in the accompanying photo gassed-up at Washington Daviess County, Indiana last week, and paid 4.39 per gallon. Still, we're lucky that aviation gas is still available at all. When many of us started flying, there were four colors of aviation fuel, red, blue, green, and the clear and oily fuel we all aspired to burn—jet fuel.

When the big round engines went away, so did the high-octane fuel they required. In most other countries, it is nearly impossible to get 100LL, and that's why manufacturers are looking for alternative power systems. Jet fuel is available most places on the planet, and that is an advantage for airplanes like the Diamond, which has a diesel engine that burns jet fuel. Daviess County was unexpectedly egalitarian about their fuel prices, jet fuel and 100LL were the same prices.



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