

Rotorcraft

Popular Rotorcraft Association



*New Website Debuts ■ E-Zine Introduction ■ PRA Regulatory Affairs Committee
CFI Scholarships Return ■ Chapter Contacts ■ September Board Meeting
Chapter Reports ■ El Mirage Adventure ■ Tech: Mac Starter Mod
Online Ground School ■ Gyro CFI Directory ■ December 2010*



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PRA's Electronic Future *Paul Plack, Editor*



Welcome to the new PRA *Rotorcraft E-Zine*! The first and most important thing to know about this new media effort is the goal - to increase and facilitate communication to, from and among members. This e-magazine format allows much shorter deadlines and turn-around than paper magazine formats, so prepare yourself to take advantage of what it can do for PRA, your chapter, and your own individual pursuit of the personal rotorcraft sport.

You'll notice a couple things right away that are different from paper magazines. The biggest is the ability to provide [links](#) from the text in the E-Zine to external sources on the internet. You'll see these links even in a printed copy, but when you view the E-Zine on your computer, you can click the links to navigate to websites and other online resources which offer expanded detail. This will eventually grow to include embedded video.

Rotorcraft is not intended to be simply a vehicle to tell the members what the leadership is doing, although improving that channel is certainly a goal. It's also about communication among chapters, a channel which withered in recent years. [Western Rotorcraft](#), the regional, monthly publication now shared by five chapters in the west is the inspiration for this new format, and it has been exciting to see the revitalizing effect on local groups of seeing what each other are doing. Share as much as you can each month about your local activities, and let's bring back the feel of "Buzzin' the Chapters!"

You'll quickly notice that this first issue is heavy on news from the western US. That's because Chapters 1, 2, 15, 31 and 73 have been participating in a regional newsletter pool since June, and are accustomed to sharing their activities with a wider audience. They've seen increased interest and recruitment as a result. Now, it's your turn. See for yourself how much more interesting the sport and your chapter become when you participate!

This issue of the new *Rotorcraft* is simply the first stage of a work in progress. It's tempting to apologize for areas in which it's not yet fully developed, but I'd prefer to leave that with you as a challenge. My job as editor will be to take what you send me each month and shape it into a final product that benefits the sport. It will get more complete as time goes on, but its success ultimately depends on timely content. Read the Guide for Contributors on page 15, and see if there isn't something you or your chapter is doing that could inspire others. And take a camera along!

On this month's cover: CFI Mike Burton of Airgyro Aviation at the controls of Brian Bird's SparrowHawk, provides an intro flight for an attendee at Brigham City Airport in Utah ([KBMC](#)) during Rotors Over The Rockies 2010.

Rotorcraft E-Zine is published monthly, and is the official communications medium for the Popular Rotorcraft Association. PRA annual dues are US\$42 per year. Members unable to receive Rotorcraft E-Zine electronically should contact Jennifer Gillmore at the PRA Office at (574) 353-7227 to arrange for delivery of a paper newsletter at additional cost. Immediate family of PRA members may apply for a non-voting Family Membership with dues of \$8 for each additional family member.

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You Can

Afford to Be a Pilot



How to become a pilot and fly for fun
on a middle income budget.

by Tim O'Connor



PRA VP Tim O'Connor, also a gyroplane CFI, has written a book titled, "You Can Afford to Be a Pilot – How to Become a Pilot and Fly for Fun on a Middle Income Budget." (Cover shown above.)

This is not test prep, but a sensible guide to evaluating the right aircraft for you, shopping for the right instruction, realistically planning for expenses, and other issues facing newcomers to aviation.

As a "Grand Opening" special for the new PRA Website, PRA members receive a 40% discount through December 10, 2010. Get order details [here](#), and [contact Tim](#) for details.

G-YROX Suspended

Norman Surplus (right) has announced on his blog that, due to deteriorating seasonal weather conditions in the Bering Straits and North Atlantic, he has stowed his yellow MT03 gyroplane in the Philippines for the winter, and will resume his circumnavigation attempt in the spring. Get updates at www.gyroxgoesglobal.com.

PRA Selects New Website Designer

Under the supervision of PRA VP Tim O'Connor, bids were solicited, and one chosen, for an overhaul of pra.org. The bidder chosen was [Kendall Web Tools](#), which has been providing software and web sites for companies, groups and individuals for over 20 years. The goal is to improve the look, feel and usability of the site, which over the past decade or so has been built and managed by a succession of volunteers.

Additional features to be included in the new design are the continued ability to join and renew memberships; a new members-only section providing exclusive content; a moderated forum which can be read by the public, but to which only PRA members can post; a PRA store and links to vendors willing to offer discounts to members; and the ability of members to access and update their membership information.

The winning bid to produce the new website to PRA requirements was \$6,600. The new site should be debuting about the time you get this issue of Rotorcraft. Check it out at www.pra.org.

New PRA Regulatory Affairs Committee

In a move to end ambiguity regarding PRA's official point of contact for FAA on regulatory matters, President Scott Lewis has appointed a Regulatory Affairs Committee. The committee will be the official point of contact with PRA for the FAA and other organizations on regulatory matters. While the ASTM committee, with Greg Gremminger of Magni USA, LLC as chairman, regroups to fight the next round in the battle to gain Experimental Light Sport Aircraft (E-LSA) acceptance for gyroplanes in the US, and eventually Special Light Sport Aircraft (S-LSA) status, PRA's effort will focus for now on an effort to find a path to secure Letters of Deviation Authority (LODA) from the FAA for compensated instruction in Experimental Amateur Built (EAB) gyroplane trainers.

The Regulatory Affairs Committee has four members. Tim O'Connor is PRA Vice President and earned his Gyroplane Instructor certificate from the FAA earlier this year. He owns a Farrington Twinstarr tandem trainer, but is unable to offer compensated instruction in it due to the FAA freeze on the issuance of new LODA. It is expected that Tim's case will be the one used to test an approach to the FAA for a new LODA. If successful, PRA will offer similar assistance to any gyroplane instructor who is a PRA member and needs help negotiating the LODA application process. Tim will serve as chairman of the committee.

Other members include Gary Goldsberry and Chris Burgess, both active, established instructors with current LODA issued before the FAA freeze. Both have significant helicopter experience in addition to their gyroplane credentials, and both have solid safety records earned over decades of instruction in EAB trainers. Rotorcraft Editor Paul Plack will serve the committee in a secretarial capacity.

Notice has been sent to the FAA and EAA of the new committee.



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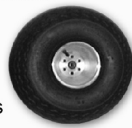
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Online Ground School

PRA VP Tim O'Connor, (right, seated in front,) a gyroplane CFI, is making available an online ground school for the Sport Pilot/Gyroplane certificate, Thursdays beginning January 6, 2011. Here is a chance for those seeking the certificate to complete the preparation for the FAA Knowledge Test online.

The course will total 20 hours of virtual classroom instruction, and students will be assigned homework. You'll need a computer running Windows (XP or newer), fast internet connection, sound card and headphones. (Mic is optional.)

Other required class materials include: Electronic E6B Flight Computer; Sectional Chart Plotter, must be rotating type; a supply of sectional maps, one must be Cincinnati; one or more FAA Airport Directories, one must cover Ohio; a copy of the exam diagram booklet (FAA Computer Testing Supplement); a bound notebook; a copy of FAA FAR/AIM 2011; a selection of FAA handbooks, circulars, fliers and publications relevant to your exam; several packs of index cards; Post-It notes (several packs). Tim is working on sourcing these materials in bundled form for those who need them.

Students achieving a 90% or higher score on test prep will receive an endorsement to take the knowledge test at an FAA authorized testing center. Tuition is \$199.95, or \$99.95 for PRA members.

Contact [Tim O'Connor](mailto:gyro.pilot@yahoo.com) for details and registration, gyro.pilot@yahoo.com.

Editor's Note - Tim's first class filled quickly after its announcement in the PRA E-Alert. Watch your e-mail for details on the next available class.

KBFFI a Success

The annual Ken Brock Freedom Fly-In, an [event](#) that dates back to the early days of the light gyroplane sport, was one of the more interesting of the past several years, especially notable for the availability of intro flights in a gyroglider (right). Old friendships were renewed, new ones begun, and even a few dented ones patched up the weekend of September 24-26 on the [El Mirage Dry Lake Bed](#) in California.

The event was accident-free, (for aircraft and other sorts of vehicles as well,) and while the afternoons got hot and windy, the mornings were cool and calm enough for some attendees to get their first personal experiences involving "air under the tires" in a single-place machine. Congrats to the hard-working members of Chapter 1, and all others who made this terrific event happen. (Read more in Doug Barker's "El Mirage Adventure," page 6. KBFFI 2011 will be held September 23-25.)



Gyroplane CFIs

The following instructors are PRA members. This list is in the process of being updated to reflect current availability. This list is provided as a convenience for readers, and does not constitute an endorsement of any instructor, aircraft, syllabus or training enterprise by PRA. (Aircraft listed in parentheses are available for instruction.)

Arkansas

[Ron Menzie](#) (501) 766-6456
2715 S Main St
Searcy, AR 72143
(SparrowHawk, Parsons, RAF)

Arizona

[Terry Brandt](#) (602) 739-0554
11423 W Citrus Grove
Avondale, AZ 85392
(Customer's Aircraft)

Florida

[Dofin Fritts](#) (850) 587-2504
Brewton Muni Airport AL 12J
Pensacola, FL
(251) 867-9446
(Customer's Aircraft)

Robert Martian (772) 546-7335
8011 SE Helen Terrace
Hobe Sound, FL 33455
(Marchetti)

[Glen Garrick](#) (386) 479-4838
635 Forest Lane
Deland, FL 32724
(RAF)

Georgia

[Steve McGowan](#) (478) 461-1451
2725 Herbert Small Airport Rd
Macon, GA 31217
(SparrowHawk, Parsons)

Illinois

[Don Randle](#) (217) 414-0108
18690 Hilltop Rd
Petersburg, IL 62675
(Customer's Aircraft)

[Chuck Roberg](#) (630) 983-7625
614 Bunker Hill Ct
Naperville, IL 60540
(Customer's Aircraft)

Indiana

[Gary Goldsberry](#) (317) 996-2487
1181 W SR 42
Mooresville, IN 46158
(Twinstarr)



El Mirage Adventure

Doug Barker

The weekend of September 25 was a magical moment in time that I will never forget. [Chapter 2](#) put together a road trip and 3 of us (Mike Burton, Paul Plack and I) made the commitment to take a day off work and make the journey to [El Mirage](#), CA to spend a couple days in the sun, visiting with friends and checking out all kinds of rotorcraft. I knew it was going to be a great trip and really tried to promote it hard to everyone in the chapter because I wanted more of our members to share in this unforgettable experience. However, this year, we all got more than we bargained for.

Before we ever left, Mike had been talking to Kevin Richey (a chapter member that lives in Portland, OR) about how it wasn't as much fun to travel to a fly-in when you didn't have something to fly when you were there. Well, Kevin (being the incredibly generous man he is) offered to let Mike (who is a CFI) take his Sport Copter up for a flight while we were there. We (Paul and I) were excited that Mike was going to get to fly, but inwardly we were both wishing we could too. There are a few 2 place machines there that were willing to take a new person up, but when you weigh 220 lbs like I do and you're flying in hot weather like we were, it's hard to find a pilot and machine that can take you up, even if they are willing to, so I had resigned myself to settle for a flight in the Gyro Glider they had promised to have running for the event.

And true to their word, they pulled out the Glider and hooked it up behind Ben's pickup and started taking people for introductory flights in the glider. Since I am planning to build a gyroglider for training, I was really hoping to get a ride in theirs, and I did. I was happy and satisfied, and if that was all that happened I would have gone home a happy man, with my temporary flight fix taken care of for a little while. But Kevin had bigger and better

Gyroplane CFIs

Indiana (cont')

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(RAF)

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things in mind for us and soon asked both Paul and I if we would like a shot at flying his Sport Copter also. Paul was ready for that and quickly accepted the offer and I was very thankful that he offered the chance to me, but I didn't feel like I was ready for a solo flight, so I told Kevin that I would hate to bend his machine up for him and I needed to decline his offer.

He explained that he knew I wasn't ready to take off and fly the pattern yet but that he had talked to Mike (my CFI) about it and Mike felt I was ready to be turned loose with the machine to do some balancing on the mains and even some short and low crow hops in ground effect if I felt ready for it. With Mike's blessing and Kevin's assurance that he really wanted me to try it I decided I would be crazy to turn down an offer like this.



The next morning when the air was calm and I had miles of flat lakebed all around me to practice on, Kevin went over his machine with me and made sure I was familiar with the controls, then Mike gave me some last minute instruction on what he wanted to see me do. I taxied out and started to pre-rotate the blades. I quickly learned that balancing on the mains is a lot harder to do than it sounds, but after learning to adjust the power I got where I could do it pretty well. I stayed out for about 45 minutes, until I felt guilty for hogging his machine, then came back in. Balancing on the mains is a whole different experience on a lake bed where you don't have to worry much about your track and can concentrate on the stick and the throttle. I learned more that day than I would have ever thought possible. What an incredible day.

PRA Chapters

Arizona

- #15 Arizona Rotorcraft Club
[Britta Penca](#)
(520) 840-0951

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- #6 Mid-South Rotorcraft Club
[Thom Francis](#)
(870) 403-2888

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- #31 San Diego Rotorcraft Club
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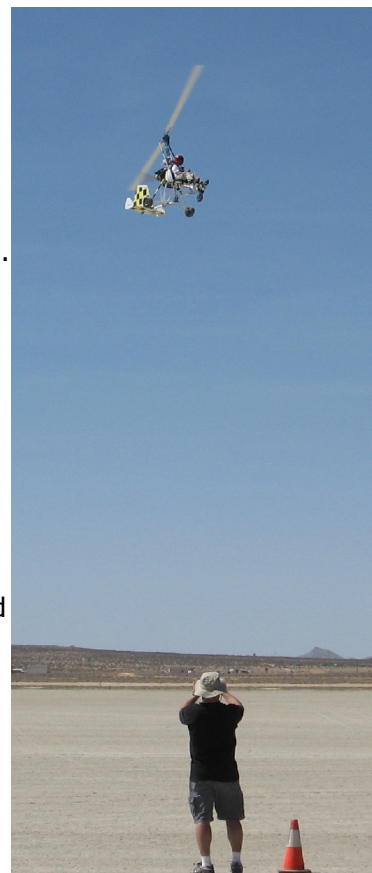
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But it gets even better. Since I didn't bend up his machine and he could see the pure joy on my face when I came in, Kevin asked me if I wanted to have another try at it the next morning. That answer didn't take long to get out of my mouth. The next morning the winds were dead calm again so I filled up the tank and out again I went, this time with a lot more confidence. After balancing on the mains for a little while I started giving it a little more power and letting the speed build up a little faster and the next thing I knew the machine was leaving the ground. I hadn't given it enough power to stay up in the air and it soon return back to earth.

Mike had told me that if it started to take off to be careful not to chop the power but to use the stick to increase the rotor angle and that would increase the drag and it would settle back down. As I was going through this ritual I could hear that music that plays on the Ken Brock training video as he did this over and over. It was a magical time that I will never forget. There was one time when the machine popped up higher than I was expecting and when I pulled back on the cyclic instead of settling it went up even higher (a little too much power) I got nervous and cut back on the power which gave me as Paul and Vance would say an "inelegant" landing but I learned form the experience. Soon, I was doing crow hops up and down the lake bed and having the time of my life.

I had been out nearly an hour and was getting low on fuel, but I really just didn't want to stop. I lined up for one last run, sped up the rotors and quickly came off the ground, but this time instead of immediately settling back to earth I decided to see how long I could hold it there. I was running about 5 to 10 ft off the ground and it stabled out and just stayed there so I let it run. Before I knew it I'd flown the width of the lake bed and then settled back in with a perfect landing. I knew I couldn't ever beat that and it was time to taxi back in so I did. But when I got off that machine, I was a different person. I had taken a Gyroplane off the ground, all by myself, and flown it for a minute before coming back down to earth in a smooth and nearly perfect landing. That may not technically be a solo, but it was close enough for me. I had left the bonds of earth and soared, even if it was only in ground effect, and my life will never be the same. I can still feel the excitement and awe of what I accomplished, a week later. It truly was a magical time and I know I got way more than I had bargained for. I wish everyone could have just as magical an experience in their life. Who knows, maybe someday everyone will. (Right, CFI Mike Burton flies N15GY at El Mirage.)



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A Starter for the Mac **Marion Springer, CFI**

Editor's Note: Each month, we'll bring you an article featuring build threads, creative solutions to common rotorcraft challenges, or other material of value to homebuilders. We couldn't be more pleased to start with this article from Marion Springer. For those of you who don't know Marion, she is the first woman gyro CFI, a former Bensen dealer, author of the autobiography 'Born Free – My Life in Gyrocopters,' and an icon of the gyroplane sport. After spending more than a decade on the ground following the passing of her husband and flying partner Docko, Marion was convinced to return to flying in 2007, and did so in 2008. Marion and Born Free have flown each year since at El Mirage, and we couldn't be prouder to bring you this part of her story as our first technical article in Rotorcraft E-Zine. Above, Marion explains some of the features of Born Free to curious onlookers at the 2010 Ken Brock Freedom Fly-In.

The [McCulloch engine](#) doesn't come equipped with a starter but that wasn't a problem for me during my years of gyro flying because my husband Docko, was there to prop the engine for me. With his help always available, I never even thought about a starter.

Docko passed away, and I retired from gyro flying and instructing. Several years later I decided to fly again. [Chapter 1](#) gyro pilots were kind enough to go through my gyro which had been sitting idle for 12 years. They brought it up to flying condition, and suddenly I was flying again. But Docko was no longer there to start the engine. That's when not having a starter on the gyro became a big problem.

Pulling a prop though to start the engine is not something you can just ask any passerby to do. It is a dangerous procedure and the one who handles the prop must understand how to do it properly and safely. In my career I had started the McCulloch engine exactly twice by pulling the prop through but that was many moons ago, when I was younger and more nimble.

PRA Chapters

Ohio

#19 Buckeye Rotorheads
[Brad Dutton](#)
(330) 767-1019

#40 Cincinnati Rotorcraft Assoc.
[Scott Biser](#)
(513) 383-5046

Oregon

#73 [Great NW Sport Rotorcraft](#)
[Robert Johnson](#)
(503) 665-4449

Pennsylvania

#4 West Penn Rotorcraft Club
[James Nadig](#)

South Carolina

#13 [SC / GA Rotorcraft Club](#)
[John C. Magnan](#)
(706) 547-3607

Texas

#62 [Lone Star Rotorcraft Club](#)
[Steve Weir](#)
(832) 457-1785

#78 [Texas Rotorcraft Assoc.](#)
[Bob Stark](#)
(940) 564-2938

Utah

#2 [Utah Rotorcraft Assoc.](#)
[Doug Barker](#)
(801) 444-3736

Virginia

#22 Nat'l Capital Rotorcraft Club
["Buck" Buchanan](#)
(703) 250-4868

Puerto Rico

#60 Puerto Rico Rotor Club
[Charles D. Peterson](#)
(787) 460-6820

International Chapters

Bolivia

#23 Aeroclub Oriental
Christopher Sellars
Casilla #3058
Santa Cruz, Bolivia
(591) 334-0939

France

#28 Autogyre St. Ciers Charente
Eric Changeur
Moulin du Chatelard, Puyreaux
Charente France F-16230



When I became a Bensen dealer I propped it at Igor Bensen's request. He wanted to see if I could start the Mac by myself. I started it another time so Docko would know that I could start it if I had to. That was the total of my propping the engine. At this stage of life I really didn't want to have to prop the engine to fly. In my group of gyro friends there were only two gyro pilots who were experienced in propping the McCulloch. Neither one lived in the area, and both were up here in the high desert only occasionally, so if I was going to fly, I needed a starter.

To my great joy, there was a discussion on the Rotary Wing forum on the internet about starters for the McCulloch. Mark Carmouche said he could make a starter kit so I ordered one from him. When the kit arrived I contacted Dave Bacon, a gyro pilot friend, to see if he would [put the starter on my gyro](#). He said he would.

Poor Dave, he probably didn't realize what he was getting into! It was the middle of summer with day temps over 100 degrees in the high desert. He traveled a couple of hours each way from his much cooler home base over several weekends to work on the starter project in a sweltering hot hangar.



The starter kit was beautiful. The mounting brackets were well made and beautifully finished in bright red.

Dave set to work, but it was obvious some modifying would be necessary. There simply wasn't room for the Wunderlich prerotator and the starter's flywheel as it was set up. I wasn't about to give up the prerotator! The problem was solved by changing the prerotator's mounting bracket for an older version, allowing room for both the prerotator and the flywheel.

PRA Chapters

Germany

#3 German Rotorcraft Club
Ewe Hager
St. Ulrich Strasse
14 Eresing
D-86922 Germany St Ulrich Str 14
Eresing, D-86922 Germany

Japan

#79
Akira Ishikawa
2-1-11 Tsujido-Taheidai
Fujisawa 251, Japan

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PRA Discounts

At this time, the following PRA partners are offering discounts to members in good standing. These offers can be accessed through the Members Section at www.pra.org.

Falcon Insurance – 5%

Rotor Flight Dynamics – 2% on Dragon Wings rotors; 5% on all other products.

Note: PRA member Discounts may not be combined with other discounts, coupons or special offers. All discounts subject to verification of member status.

Classified Ads

For Sale, Misc - New 90 HP Mac engine has never been started. Inspected and upgraded by Red Smith at R&D Engineering, new R&D prop included. \$4,000 invested, asking \$3,000 OBO. Ken Brock KB-2 with 72 Mac with electric starter. Joe Souza Bandit one-place. Fresh Subaru EA81 with gearbox and Prince P-tip prop, 110+ HP. New Rotordyne blades. Losing my eyesight so I am selling. Contact Jim, (805) 239-9713 for more information.

Classified Ad Rates: \$10 per issue up to 30 words, 20 cents for each additional word, payment in advance. Deadline is the 19th of each month for the following issue unless otherwise noted. Contact Jennifer Gillmore for more information or to place an ad: (574) 353-7227.

Dave mounted the starter and hooked it up to a battery and we pushed the gyro out to the run up pad and ran the engine up briefly. Our joy was cut short when it was discovered that the starter had slung a bushing and it had gouged the propeller. So, back to the drawing board.

The starter that had come with the kit had been a reconditioned starter. It didn't have a cap or cover on the front end which was supposed to keep everything inside where it was supposed to be, and that allowed the bushing to escape. While waiting for Dave's next visit to the desert I patched the prop, which had only two shallow gouges in the hub area.

Two weekends later Dave picked up a new starter and installed it in the mounting brackets. The new starter was too long. The end of it was right up against the prop. That meant another trip to the drawing board. Dave had learned of another starter that would work so he returned the one that was too long and bought a new one.

The new starter is small and compact and weighs 8 lbs. It is made by Ford and is used in race cars. By its diminutive size the starter looked like it would slip right into the mounting brackets, but not so. Apparently, nothing was going to be that easy with this installation! After cutting a bit off the mounting bracket, Dave tried to fit the starter again, but same story...it was still hanging up. Dave said to me, "I can cut a little off the corner of the starter itself and it will fit, but if I do that and it doesn't work, we can't take it back to the store. You will have a very pricey shelf ornament. What do I do?" Knowing that we were just about out of options regarding starters I said to him, "make it fit", and he did.

With the new starter securely in the mounting brackets, (right,) Dave finished wiring up the battery and with great anticipation we once more pushed the gyro out to the run up pad and started that baby up. Oh how sweet it was. To just turn the switch on and push the starter button and have the mighty Mac come to life was a dream come true. I was like a kid with a new toy, I'd start the engine, let it run a minute or so, shut it down and start it up again, and again.



Next was the hang test. We had added about 30 lbs. to the gyro including the battery, so we needed to know what that had done to the CG. At 8 AM the next morning we took the gyro to a gateway on the field and hoisted the machine off the ground, and I climbed into the seat. It was determined that the nose down angle was 2 degrees so all was OK with the CG.

Teddy Udala had recently made some modifications to his gyro so we did a hang test on his gyro the same day. By the time both machines were done it was well over 100 degrees and too hot to fly. But that was OK. There will be cooler days to fly and I now have the freedom of starting my gyro when I choose to fly.

Having a starter will not only make it easier to start the engine but will make it safer too. After so many years of having someone prop the engine for me I am having a little problem realizing I must start the engine myself now.

Event Calendar

Note: The Rotorcraft Event Calendar is open to meetings and events of PRA chapters with minimum 45 days notice. Other events of interest to rotorcraft enthusiasts may be included at the discretion of the editor. To submit an event, send event name, sponsoring chapter, dates, times, location, and a URL, e-mail address and/or phone contact to editor@utahrotorcraft.org.

(G) General Aviation Event
(R) Rotorcraft Event

New Years Fly-In (R) Sunstate Wing & Rotor (PRA 26) Dec 30-Jan 1, Wauchula, FL

Ring in 2011 at the home of Bensen Days! Admission and camping are free, hookups \$10/night. Contact Scott Lewis for more info and details: (561) 718-3922.

US Sport Aviation Expo (G) Jan 20-23, Sebring, FL

The largest annual show in the US dedicated to LSA. Indoor and outdoor displays featured 175 exhibitors in 2010, including engines, accessories, more. ([Info](#))

Sun n Fun Fly-In/Expo (G) Mar 29-Apr 3, Lakeland, FL

SnF is a large, independent event which in 2011 will feature a salute to the Centennial of Naval Aviation, including a performance by the Blue Angels. ([Info](#))

Bensen Days (R) Sunstate Wing & Rotor (PRA 26)

Apr 6-11, Wauchula, FL
This regional event is focused on gyroplanes, and rivals or exceeds the annual PRA convention in size. ([Info](#))

**Arizona Fly-In (R)
Arizona Rotorcraft Club
(PRA 15)
May 14-15, San Manuel, AZ**
Info: (520) 840-0186

Life time habits are hard to break. An example here...I will get into the seat of the gyro, buckle up and prime the engine. Dave will say, "OK," meaning ready to start, and I sit there for a few seconds wondering why he is taking so long to walk back and prop the engine. Then I feel like a dummy when it dawns on me that HE is waiting for ME to hit the start button! I'm sure that's something that will come naturally in due time.

During the last week of September, 2009 at the Ken Brock Freedom Fly-in I flew my gyro for the first time (right, note battery on keel) with the new starter. The flight was very brief as the temperature that day was 103 degrees and our field elevation is 2990 ft. MSL. The density altitude was something else!

I only flew my gyro about two miles from my hangar to the flight line. Common sense said to wait for cooler weather to do flight testing to get the feel of the heavier weight of the gyro. In time the weather cooled to a more comfortable temperature and I put some time on the gyro and the new starter. The difference I noticed was a slightly longer take off run but not objectionable. I think the longer run and the increased weight is a fair trade off for the convenience and safety. I am very grateful to Mark Carmouche for making the kit and to Dave Bacon for installing it for me.

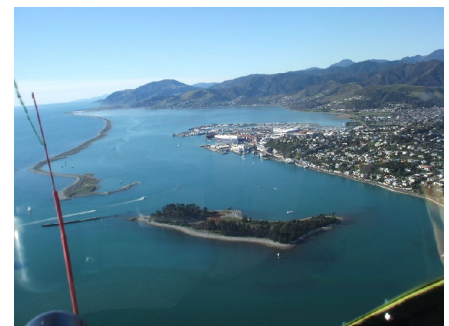


Rotax 503 to Stay?

At Oshkosh, representatives of Lockwood Aviation, a major Rotax distributor in the US, made an effort to clear up misconceptions about the two remaining air-cooled, two-stroke aircraft engines in the product line-up. They say Rotax has no plans for any further manufacturing runs at this time, but has a supply of both engine types adequate for three to five years at current sales levels. The threat to the

continuation of the 447 and 503 has nothing to do with a corporate whim, but rather the absence of any volume manufacturer of aircraft using either engine at this time. The 503 was recently declared compliant with industry consensus standards, allowing its use in S-LSA aircraft, but there are no manufacturers doing so at this time. Overhaul and repair parts for both engines are expected to remain plentiful for years to come, if not from Rotax directly, from aftermarket suppliers. (Manufacturer's photo.)

New Zealand Cross Country - Colin Gibson of Nelson, New Zealand recently posted some breathtaking photos from a cross-country trip in his SparrowHawk. At right, "climbing out on 02 on track over the boulder bank which is a natural feature of the coast here." Find this and more stunning photos, Colin's account of the trip, and comments from other readers, in his [original thread](#) started in June 2010.



Event Calendar

Rotors Over The Rockies UT Rotorcraft Assoc. (R) (PRA 2)

Jun 9-11, Brigham City, UT
Admission and on-airport camping are free. US Air Force is tentatively scheduling a free airshow at Hill AFB, 25 NM south of event, for same weekend. ([Info](#))

Vertical Challenge (R) Hiller Aviation Museum Jun 18, San Carlos, CA

Helicopter-oriented airshow in its 12th year. ([Info](#))

Homer Bell Meet (R) Homer K. Bell Consulting Jul 21-23, Hillsboro, OH

Homer provides consulting and other services for builders of kit helicopters. Venue is a farm - may require VTOL capability. ([Info](#))

EAA AirVenture (G) Exp. Aircraft Assoc.

Jul 25-31, Oshkosh, WI
The largest fly-in in the world. Tens-of-thousands of aircraft, hundreds of vendors incl. Most major aircraft mfrs. Type club gatherings and group fly-ins, seminars, workshops. Rotorcraft flight limited to Ultralight Village, certain hours. Camping adjacent to Wittman Regional Airport. Volunteers recruited annually from EAA chapters. ([Info](#))

PRA Convention (R) Popular Rotorcraft Assoc. Aug 2-6, Mentone, IN

This event in 2010 drew 70 rotorcraft and 55 powered parachutes. Annual members meeting, on-field camping and food. ([Info](#))

Ken Brock Freedom Fly-In Ken Brock Rtrcrft Assoc. (PRA 1) (R)

Sep 23-25, El Mirage, CA
This legendary event takes place on a dry lake bed with enough room for gyro-gliders, a taste of the old-school, west coast gyrocopter scene, and a Saturday night corn roast at the Brock Ranch. ([Info](#))

PRA Chapter Reports

The next two pages include reports submitted by PRA Chapters on recent activities. This monthly feature will rely on submissions from individuals, which can be made to editor@utahrotorcraft.org. Be sure to include photos, and leave them in their original, full size. Here's this month's tour!

The Ken Brock Rotorcraft Association ([PRA 1](#), CA) will not meet in December or January. The next meeting is scheduled for Saturday, February 12, 2011 at 11am PST at Teddy Udala's ranch. The agenda will include nomination for officers. The group is considering moving meetings to Moe's Ranch, near the El Mirage Dry Lake.

Chapter 1 wishes to thank Brandon Evans, (right,) who came to El Mirage from Arizona for the Ken Brock Freedom Fly-In towing a HUGE grill, and donated the steaks for the cook-out. Brandon's grill also came in very handy for the hot dog cookout the following day. He also brought picnic benches.



The Utah Rotorcraft Association ([PRA 2](#)) will hold its next two Saturday meetings, January 8 and February 12, completely online starting at 10am MST each day, with business meetings to be followed by webinars. Details will be posted on the website when finalized.

Our group outing to El Mirage in September resulted in the chance for three members who do not own flying single-place gyroplanes to fly a machine (left) owned by member Kevin Richey, and prompted a discussion of group ownership. Current thoughts are to form a partnership independent of the chapter, pooling an initial buy-in with hourly fees to cover maintenance, storage and insurance costs. Five members have indicated interest.

The newly-formed Colorado Rotorcraft Association is in the process of rounding up the required documentation to apply for affiliation as a PRA chapter. Co-founder Mark Shook says, "We want to keep formalities, dues, and paperwork to a minimum, and fun to a maximum. Our goal is to have multiple chapter flying activities...in the warmer months.

(At right, L-R: Mark Treidel, Dick Goddard, Mark Shook at Centennial Airport in CO.)

"We will welcome members from anywhere in Colorado, New Mexico, Kansas or Wyoming, but our primary area is the Front Range Metro Area from Fort Collins to Pueblo Colorado. Please direct those interested in joining, to contact me at: Mark@MeadowLakeAirport.com."



The Sierra Rotorcraft Club ([PRA 58](#)) is based in Livermore, CA. This chapter was started in 1981 by a group of Rotorway kit helicopter enthusiasts, and is enjoying a revival with an influx of about 15 new members. The group's website explains, "Most of the helicopters in the club are Rotorway 90s and Exec 162s. There are also some Gyrocopters and Helicycles. There is even an Exec with a rotary engine that is a masterpiece of engineering." The group collects no dues, and is administered largely through its website. Find out more at: www.sierrarotorcraftclub.org.

Regional Reps

The PRA Regional Representative Program was introduced in August of 2009 at the annual convention in Mentone, and subsequently publicized in Rotorcraft magazine. The purpose of the program is to provide a liaison between groups of chapters in various regions (below) of the US and the board of directors. Reps are nominated from among active PRA members in each region, and elected by the member of the chapters.



Reps will be invited to attend PRA board meetings to bring concerns of chapters in their region to the board. Reps may be asked to take issues back to chapters for discussion. Other possible roles include writing a column to chapter newsletters, keeping the PRA office aware of changes in the status of flight instruction in the region, and working with Chapter Coordinator Dave Bacon to keep chapter contact info updated.

Currently, four regions have reps (below with chapters):

Western/Pac - Jeff Jones (1)
 NW/Mtn - Paul Plack (2)
 Southern - Jon Carleton (13)
 Southwest - Steve Weir (62)

If your chapter is located in one of the other regions, make a New Years Resolution now to find a candidate, and contact the other chapters in your region to arrive at a consensus on a nomination. If two or more candidates seek the position, you'll need to arrange an election. The reps will play an increasing role in programs. Don't be left out!

The Arizona Rotorcraft Association

(PRA 15) has settled on May 13-15 for its 2011 fly-in at San Manuel Airport. ARC's October meeting featured a camp out at the Coolidge (AZ) Airport with a 10am MST cross-country group flight to the Copperstate Fly-In at Casa Grande on Saturday the 23rd, then back to San Manuel for a 4pm business meeting. (L-R at right, President Britta Penca and Secretary Mark Rhoads at Copperstate in the Air Command tandem they co-own with CFI Ron Menzie.)



The Cincinnati Rotorcraft Association (PRA 40)

met at the home of its most senior member, Herb Humphries, (at right,) October 16 to celebrate Herb's 89th birthday. President Scott Biser says Herb "is a big part of the his-tory of the early days of Chapter 40." Members brought and flew a wide variety of machines.



Top row, L-R: Plenty of good food was on hand for attendees at Herb's birthday bash.; "Helicopter Ed" Alderfer secures his rotor. Bottom row, L-R: Randy Workman arrives; Mark Works brought this beautiful 2001 Brantley B2B.

The Great Northwest Sport Rotorcraft Association (PRA 73)

will not meet in December. Next meeting is Saturday, January 8, 2011 at the Northwest Antique Aircraft Club (NWAAC) clubhouse at Scappoose (OR) Industrial Airport with a potluck lunch at noon, meeting at 1pm PST. Gary Kaminski won Best of Rotor Craft at the NWAAC Fly-in with his RAF 2000 (since sold); Dennis Dubois won Best Modified Rotor Craft with his one-of-a-kind, scratch-built "Viewmaster" gyro (pictured at El Mirage, right).



CFI Scholarships

Many PRA members haven't been with the organization long enough to remember that it once offered a program to help CFIs with the costs of making training available. With attrition among active gyro instructors becoming a concern, a return of such a program is being prioritized.

PRA President Scott Lewis has developed a draft document for the "PRA CFI Support Program." The goal is to recruit sponsor manufacturers willing to subsidize the sport through discounted training aircraft and ongoing support, team them with other sponsors providing cash or in-kind support to equip and operate the machine, and make the trainer available to a CFI needing a two-place machine with up to \$10,000 in loan assistance.

Applications from PRA member CFIs would be accepted via PRA Chapters in good standing. Competing applications would be evaluated for their relevance to the needs of the sport. The instructor would agree to a lien on the machine to protect the interest of PRA, and commit to a minimum schedule of event appearances, introductory flights and training quotas. As those requirements are met, the loan would be forgiven.

Six manufacturers have been identified as good candidates to provide machines for the program. Details have yet to be finalized, so if you have comments or ideas, get in touch with a PRA director. Correspondence on PRA programs and proposed initiatives are also welcome for discussion in upcoming issues of *Rotorcraft*.

The first award will be made in 2011 as funds allow. As details are finalized, they'll be reported here, and posted at the new www.pra.org.

Guide for Contributors

You're invited to be a part of the next issue! *Rotorcraft E-Zine* carries on some traditional elements of the long-running paper magazine, but it offers some new capabilities. The most important of these is speed. We now have the opportunity to receive information on your upcoming chapter event and get it distributed the next month, sometimes the next week.

Include photos! Send them in their full, original size whenever possible, and include people, not just machines. We've all seen a Bensen B8M. What makes it news is who builds, owns and flies it. If we achieve nothing else, we want you to show up at a distant fly-in and find that you already know people there. So include captions and names with photos. Submissions and questions: editor@utahrotorcraft.org

Managing Your Subscription

Unsolicited e-mail ads have become a blight, to the extent that an elaborate infrastructure has sprouted to detect and control their travel. There are new tools in use by your internet service provider which block e-mail with certain characteristics, without your knowledge or control. The interference of these systems in distributing even desired e-mail is the reason PRA is using a third-party e-mail management system, at least for now. It requires your one-time attention to work properly.

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PRA September 23 Board Meeting

The PRA Board of Directors met via teleconference at 7:00 PM on September 23, 2010 to resolve immediate issues surrounding the launch of the new Rotorcraft E-Zine, and to approve an expenditure for website development. All 11 directors eventually joined the call, and two guests, Paul Plack and Jennifer Gillmore, were also invited into the meeting to answer questions.

The board considered Paul's proposal, presented by request to the board at Mentone in August, for editing of an electronic magazine as PRA's official communications vehicle to members. The Rotorcraft E-Zine will initially be a nominal 16-page, monthly, electronic publication produced in PDF format for distribution by PRA. Paul will be appointed as editor, and retained as a contractor at \$1,200/month plus 25% of ad revenue to produce the e-zine, to be invoiced at the time each draft copy is delivered for review. At least initially, there will be an additional \$30/month expense budget for an external vendor to automate subscriber sign-up and manage delivery.

PRA Chapter 2 (Utah Rotorcraft Association) will provide hosting for the finished e-zine files, and an e-mail forwarder for incoming submission from contributors, at no cost until the new PRA website is finished and available.

Editor's Note: Unexpected requests from advertisers to be included in the debut edition resulted in the need to develop advertising rates and ad production capability before publication. The first edition's target has been revised to a December 1 release, to coincide with the debut of the new PRA website.

Treasurer Robert Rymer offered financial projections. As of September 23, the PRA balance in the bank was \$17,803.35 unreconciled. With this balance and expected dues income, expenditures and continuing with Powered Sport Flying magazine, PRA would face a deficit of \$1,376 on January 1, 2011. With the model of the electronic magazine, projected cash flow would last nearly till the convention in August 2011.

Ernie Boyette reminded everyone that the E-Zine will bring in revenue from advertisers, a source of funding lost in the relationship with Powered Sport Flying. Duane Hunn offered a motion to reduce dues to \$42 for members receiving the E-Zine, while leaving them at the current \$49.95 for members requiring a paper newsletter sent by mail, contingent on feasibility. The motion was passed. Members will be required to contact Jennifer individually to receive mail service.

Tim O'Connor reported on his search for a professional website developer, and said he is reviewing proposals from two designers. Current bids for a site meeting PRA's needs are \$6,200 and \$6,600. Rights management and display software was discussed, but the first two issues of the Rotorcraft E-Zine are expected to be made available as free downloads regardless of membership.

The board approved a budget limited to \$7,500 to move forward once a website designer is accepted, and passed another motion made by Scott Lewis that Jennifer be commissioned 15% of any ad revenue that she personally generates.

Editor's Note: This summary of major topics discussed by PRA directors is presented to keep members informed of ongoing PRA issues. This summary is based on preliminary meeting minutes which have not yet been corrected and/or approved by the board, and must therefore be considered unofficial.

The new PRA website, right, debuted in beta form for testing November 29.



Are you letting a little snow or cold keep you grounded? Randy Workman (above) of Chapter 40 plowed the snow off his grass strip last winter, so he could take off in his Bensen! An aerial view of the strip is below. These photos by Mark Works were posted on the Rotary Wing Forum by Tim O'Connor.



Finally, Peggi Johnson of Bettendorf, Iowa obviously has a little trouble embracing her inner eskimo. She posted the photo below on Facebook!

