



Third Quarter 2017
 Volume 10, Issue 3
 August 2017



Letter from the Editor:

Hi folks,

Another adventure completed with great memories to share. Donna and I flew to AirVenture in the little C-152 we bought 2 years ago. Since we bought it, the plane is now leased to Pelican Flying Club, Inc. based at Sebastian Municipal Airport (X26) in Sebastian, FL. I will have more to say about the trip later in the magazine.

AirVenture was a great one this year, great weather, except for Wednesday, and new avionics and airplanes made for a record AirVenture. The Lightning booth was really busy and it is always nice to see Tom Hoffman, H&S Aviation, Greg and Crystal Hobbs, Lightning Aircraft West, Mark Stauffer (who obviously can't stay away), Buz Rich, Nick, and other folks that help in the booth.

I also went to Marana, Arizona in early May to help out with the US Flight Expo. Again, I had a lot of fun and if there is another show, I hope it does better. More on that later as well.

The next Lightning event is the Lightning Homecoming which will be held September 29 and 30, 2017. Hope to see you there.

Blue Skies,
 Dennis W. Wilt
dwwilt@aol.com

Inside This Issue:

AirVenture 2017	2
News from the Factory	8
News from the Dealers	11
Current Lightning Dealers	14
News from Builders and Owners	15
Dan Johnson Article	18
For Sale	20
Upcoming Events	23
Lightning of the Quarter and Pilot Spotlight Questions	25
Final Thoughts	26



AirVenture 2017

AirVenture 2017

Article by Dennis W. Wilt



N320XS in the Booth

It was a record year at AirVenture. I have a visual below that tells the tale, but here they are: 590,00 people in attendance, more than 10,000 aircraft flew in for the event, 11,600 campsites, etc. etc. Another great week in Oshkosh, WI. The daily air shows were fantastic as always, and the Blue Angels put on a great show. The night show on Saturday was amazing.

We couldn't have a Lightning booth without the folks that man it. Buz Rich always comes, Greg and Crystal drove from Arizona, Tom Hoffman is always at OSH, and Mark Stauffer just can't stay away. It was certainly great to have him at the booth. We had a lot of traffic through the booth and several folks that were obviously interested. I certainly enjoy talking to people that are really interested and take the time to learn about the Lightning. We had a couple of lady pilots that had non-pilot husbands that were very interested. I hope they join the family. Now for some AirVenture pictures.



Nick's Annual Selfie



AirVenture by the Numbers

(From Nick on Facebook:) "Oshkosh is a wrap and one for the books. I've been attending EAA since the early 80's. I must say it hasn't been this good since the Antonov AN124 and Concorde graced the main ramp in 86'. Wow what a show. Great meeting everyone hope you had an awesome experience too."

Thank you to the Arion Crew this year for the fine job. I bet ya'll didn't know it but the majority is volunteer. Made up of owners, builders, and close friends. We are passionate about experimental aviation and would rather talk planes than a sales pitch!"



The B1-B Making a Little Vapor



OSH the Day Before AirVenture



Mark on His Way

Mark had a nice flight up and back. Going up I know he went up to 10,500 ft., so he must have wanted to get over some lower build ups. On the way home, he reported on Facebook, "Flew home today after a great week of seeing friends at Oshkosh. 3:42 hours with no stop for fuel. My average ground speed was about 172 mph, not too shabby!" More pictures from Mark later on.

Now for some pictures of planes I have never seen before. There aren't many of those around so I had fun looking at these aircraft. they mean it has a lot of torque. It certainly looks very interesting.



A-20 Havoc



A-20 Cockpit

The A-20 Havoc. The only one in flying condition and it was an honor to see it up close. You could just fit nicely in that cockpit, don't you think?



The SNJ-4 "Bundle Buggy"



Noorduyn Norseman (1942)



Bel-Aire 4000 Specifications

Engine: Continental W670-5A Serial # 5673
 Horsepower: 220 @ 2,075 rpm
 Fuel consumption: 12.8 gph @ 1,600 rpm
 Endurance: 3.8 hours (with 10% reserve)
 Fuel capacity: 54 US gallons

Propeller: McCauley Model 41D2926
Manufacturer: McCauley Propellers, Inc., Pittsburg, KS

Weight/Dimensions:
 Empty weight: 1,823 lbs
 Max Gross Weight: 2,900 lbs
 Wingspan: 36' 6"
 Overall Length: 23' 3"
 Overall Height: 9' 2"
 Distance between main gear: 6' 9.5"

Performance:
 Takeoff: 600 feet (no wind/max gross weight)
 Rate of Climb: 100 fpm (sea level)
 Normal cruise: 33 KIAS / 96 mph
 Stall speed: 47 KIAS / 54 mph




The Bel-Aire 4000 and Specifications – New 2017 Homebuilt



F-84 Thunderjet



Midwing Special



Twister



Zenith CH300

Let me tell you a little about each airplane. Just after I took the pictures of the A-20, I saw the SNJ-4 “Bundle Buggy”. I was not able to get too close for a couple of reasons, they were working on the plane and I needed to get somewhere. I never got back and have not been able to find out much about this variant of the SNJ-4. The fuselage looks a bit shorter than the AT-6 and SNJ’s I am familiar with. I had not seen any with the rear gunner position and the guns in the wings. So, if anyone out there has more information, I would appreciate an e-mail.

Then there is the Noorduyn Norseman. This aircraft is a Canadian design built in 1942. Never seen one before, but it is a massive airplane. I noticed the Bel-Aire 4000 because it is just a beautiful plane. It was completed in 2017, so it is brand new. Based on the specifications, it looks like it was based on the Travel Air.

I have never seen an F-84 before and there it was next to the other old fighter jets. No registration number or manufacturers label anywhere. This is a tall airplane compared to the F-86 Saber Jet. The Midwing Special (called Rosie) was built in 1962 for aerobatics and flew in airshows until 1998. This aircraft is began life as a P-18 Super Cub. There were a lot of people looking at this unusual aircraft.

There were two Twisters at the show this blue one and a bright orange one that had been flown from England. Powered by the UL260 97 hp engine. And the Zenith CH300. I may have seen one before, but I don’t remember it if I did. This one was built in 1987.

How About Some Blue Angels?



Now, some Arion Aircraft folk's pictures? They were busy for over a week working and having fun.



Mark Swears the Picture on the Right is OK'd by Clare



Mark and Tom Hoffman

Tom's R-44 - The Arion Crew Went for a Ride



More Fun in Wisconsin

News from the Factory

The new demonstrator airplane is getting closer. I promise. The pictures shown are the new air intake for the Titan XIO-340. Maybe I'll get a ride when I go to Shelbyville for the Lightning Homecoming.



Air Intake for the New Demonstrator Lightning XS



The Snorkel



Fitting the Cowl

In the last issue, we talked about the intake needing to get designed and completed. That is now done and the cowl is fitted. The panel is currently getting completed, so the new demonstrator should be finished soon.

Below is a picture of the RV-10 that Arion assisted with over the past few months. All inspected and first flight coming soon.



Receiving the Airworthiness Certificate

A New Ground Adjustable Propeller from Sensenich:

Sensenich has designed a new constant speed propeller for the Lightning. They expect a significant improvement over the current wooden cruise propeller that I have on my airplane and their current constant speed propeller blades. Here are some pictures and some test results.



On the Left, Both Old and New Blades, In the Middle, New Blades on the Right

(From Nick:) "Well the wicked new Blade from Sensenich put out the goods! Test aircraft: 2007 Kit built, MK1 tail, short wing with winglets (XS tips) leg fairings and LSA style wheel pants. No intersection fairings. Both the standard blade and the new one was pitched to hit 3250 RPM flat out at 3000 ft. pressure altitude. This is how we set them up always. Takeoff RPM went from 2650 to 2750. Which shortened the roll by about 150'. Climb RPM tested at 85knts wide

open throttle went from 2750 to 2880. Giving a solid 250FPM increase in rate. Cruise in the RPM range of 2750-2950 increased by 10knots. Sensenich guaranteed these numbers. We were skeptical but the Prop Delivered!!”

Arion has a 2006 Lightning that are parting out for an owner. If you are in need of parts, contact the factory. The engine is a 2015 with only 30 hrs. TT. The owner asked Arion to part out the plane because of his health issues and he would rather part it out than sell it as a complete aircraft.



News from The Dealers

From Lightning Aircraft West:

I went out to Marana this past May and helped out with the [US Flight Expo](#). The show was underattended, but I would say it was a success related to the vendors that were selling products. I talked to most of them and they said that they made money at the show. Geronimo Aviation had three Lightnings on display, two of which were for sale. I mostly stayed at the Lightning booth to answer questions about the Lightning kits and build assist program. Below are some pictures of the aircraft that were represented at the show.



The Lightning Display



Glasair Sportsman Diesel

Kit Fox

The show display area was spread out over a very large area and because of that, it seemed to be fairly empty. There were plenty of exhibitors however, and a good time was had by all that attended. There were a couple of very windy days with some microburst type of activity. My sources say five airframes were sold during the show. Not too bad.



Paradise S-LSA



Auto-Gyros

Greg is still pondering about the possibility of a US Flight Expo for 2018. If there is one, it will be later in the year. Maybe in the Fall time frame.

At the Build Center:

Back at the build center, Tony has finished his Lightning. The pictures below tell the final tale.



Tony Built His Own Wiring Harness at Home – Wiring Installation Above



Pretty Panel



Ready For Taxi Tests



First Taxi Tests - By the Time This Goes to Press - First Flight

Current Lightning Dealers or Representatives



Arion Lightning, LLC, contact Nick Otterback, Shelbyville, TN, 931-680-1781, www.flylightning.net



Southwest: Geronimo Experimental Aircraft, Greg Hobbs, 18750 West Avra Valley Rd, Marana, AZ 85635, 520-405-6868 www.lightningaircraftwest.net



Upper Midwest: H & S Aviation, Tom Hoffman, 3015 Shady Ln, Neenah, WI 54956-9509, (920)-585-9704, tlhuffy@aol.com



Midwest: Heart of America Aviation LLC, Jack Gonzenbach, 12906 W 122nd St, Overland Park KS, 66213, (913) 890-3052, jgonzenbach@flyhoaa.com



Russia and CIS, AVIA-NIANIA Ltd, Moscow, Russia, Phone: + 7495518-62-75, Mobile Phone: + 7925518-62-75, avianiania@mail.ru or avianiania@aol.com

Editor's Announcement:

I would really like to hear from other dealers as there are sales and or aircraft for sale. The Matronics Lightning List seems to have been fixed. I am now regularly getting the e-mails. In any case, my e-mail is on the first page of the magazine and you can contact me any time with information. The composite parts are all made at AM Composites, LLC in Bowling Green, KY. Gary Smrtic is the President. Nice work being done there.



A New Kit Ready to go to Arion Aircraft

News from Builders and Flyers:

An E-Mail from Gerd Nowack
Edited by: Dennis W. Wilt

Hi Bear, hello group!

Sorry for the long time it took to answer. My White Lightning flies fine. The ULPower 390iS is humming along nicely, it has over 50hrs now (44 hrs. flight time so far).

The CS propeller from GT / Italy runs very smooth. I had to send it to Italy last year because the blade pitch motor and its gear was not working as it should. They took a long time to fix it, because they had just developed a very nice new blade that would fit my hub. When they finally had made a set for me they found that it wouldn't work because it needed the (much higher) force of the hydraulic hub it was made for.

So, they sent me the prop back with the old blades and with a new pitch drive motor. The prop can now be adjusted at any speed and power setting, so I am happy for the moment. They are in the process to make a modified version of their new blade (It's called V29 by the way) that will finally work with my electric hub. I have high hopes that the new blades will add some knots.

Performance at present is quite good. I get 145 knots IAS at 3000 ft. with 2600 rpm and Wide Open Throttle (WOT) and 26 in. Manifold Pressure, that means about 110 hp output. The fuel consumption is 25 l/h, er... a little more than 6 USG/hr. Autogas, sold for not more than \$6,75 per USG in Germany. Not even \$42 for gas per hour. Cheap, huh? ;-)
 Well, my hangar neighbor's Arrow burns fuel worth \$99 per hr.! And he is NOT getting 145KIAS with 75%!

I have solved the problem of CHTs being too low by partially closing the cooling outlet area and getting rid of the lip that protruded down from the underside of the cowl. That alone gave me 3 KIAS more!

By the way, I have calibrated my airspeed indication by checking the TAS indicated on my GRT. The error in my case is about 3KTAS @140KTAS. At low speeds, the error is almost zero. Good work, you guys from GRT!

In case anybody is interested in an Excel spreadsheet needed for this check, just e-mail (through Matronics) for the check you need a GPS GS and the GPS track. The check can, of course, be used to calculate your IAS error and the calibrated airspeeds.

Finally: I am absolutely happy with my central single stick and the throttle on the left side of the cockpit. I am looking back at 18 years of flying with side sticks commercially so this just feels natural to me. And the cockpit is much roomier!

That's it for the moment. When I have flown with the new blades I plan to write something for Dennis' Newsletter. With pics. And maybe an application for Lightning of the Quarter!

Gerd



Gerd's White Lightning

More News from Builders and Flyers:

A Flap Indication Problem Solved on the Lightning List.

From Lino Lopez:

The flap position indicator in my Lightning LS! is not moving, the electronic indicator is stuck in the lower position and the flaps are moving I can see them. I have done multiple testing including disconnecting the power, removing the fuse. Any advice please.

Replies:

1. Has the flap position sensor become detached from what moves it?

Steve Sundquist

2. Under the seats there is a sensor connected to the flap motor or the flap actuator bar. It has likely disconnected somehow.

Blue Skies,
Dennis W. Wilt
N616DW (Arion Lightning S/N 132)

Final Post from Lino Lopez:

Thanks to all that responded to my concern regarding the flap indicator, I found the problem: The flap indicator is a black box located under the seat on the right side of the airplane and it was detached from the wall and it just moved all over the place. I re-attached it to the wall and the problem was solved. thanks again.

A Problem Not Solved?

From Captain Bob:

After a recent catastrophic engine failure, I purchased and installed a nearly new (14.6 hour) Gen 3 Jabiru 3300 engine to install in my Arion Lightning LS-1. After installation of the new engine I returned the aircraft to my home base and after about 10 minutes of flight I had a "High Volts" warning on my GRT Sport EFIS. The engine screen showed about 17.9 volts on the bus and battery.

I didn't experience any other problems and landed uneventfully. I then swapped the voltage regulator that was on the aircraft with the one that came with the Jabiru 3300 (same make/model regulator). I was certain that I matched the connections that existed prior to the engine swap when exchanging the regulators. I performed several additional flights testing the new engine and adjusting the prop for best performance but still had some recurring instances of "High Volts". Some of those occurrences happen intermittently during flight and sometimes the "High Volts" light and warnings happen right after takeoff and remain on until power is reduced for landing. Volts seem ok at idle at about 14 but go as high as 18 volts when the warning is illuminated.

I have to confess to having little understanding of wiring, multi testers, and the magic of aircraft electrical systems.

What may be causing this occasionally happening problem with my electrical system. I've checked connections again and again.

Thanks, Captain Bob

Answers Anyone? You can e-mail me or answer on the Matronics Lightning List.

A Letter to the Factory:

Hi Nick and Mark,

Wayne P. here from Perth Australia (Kit 65). I met you both at Oshkosh 2015. I'm checking a problem and seeing if you have a fix. I fly with the pedals about 3/4 back. My brother flies with them about 1 hole forward. I am training a new pilot, a woman much shorter. She has completed taxi training and practice take off rolls. We moved the rudder bar forward for her.

Yesterday, we were about to do her first take off, and did a final brake check. The pedals slipped forward and she had no control.

I immediately checked that the pin was locating properly, and then found that the holding spring was providing no

upward tension. It appears to have stretched over the last 3 years and 107 flying hours while being in position for me, and lost its recovery so it doesn't work at all in a forward position.

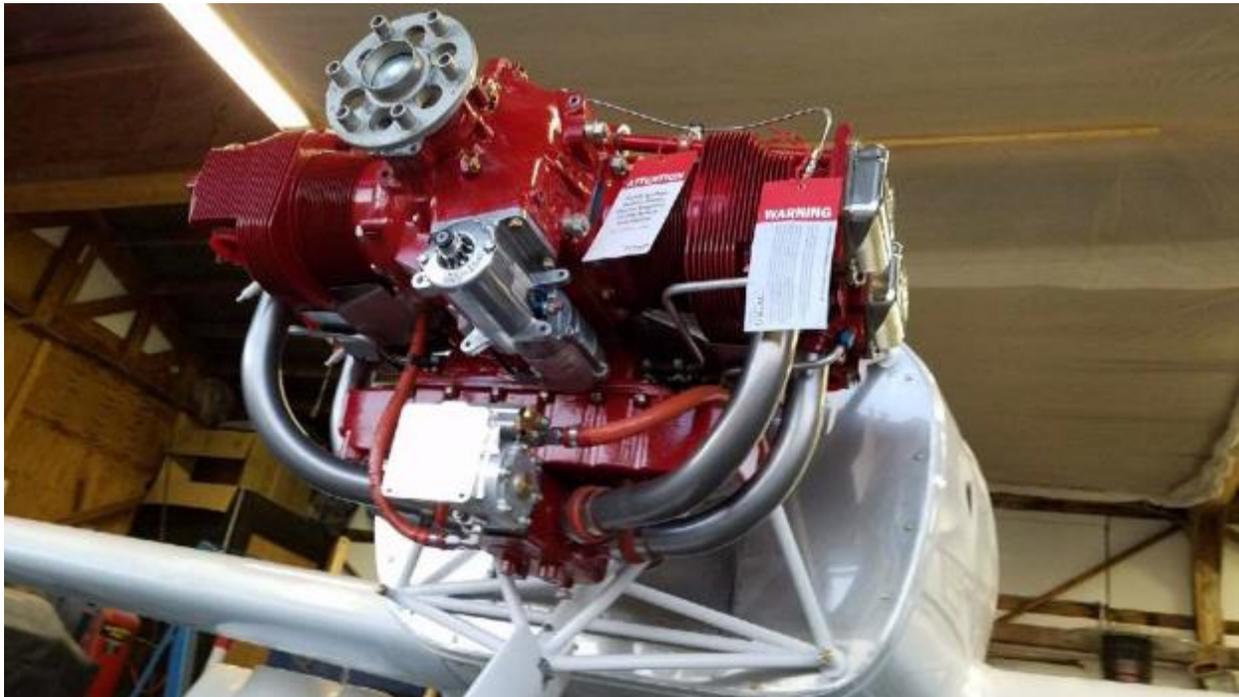
Have you heard of this, and is there a fix?

Kindest of regards!

Wayne P.

Answer:

Arion Aircraft has not seen this problem before. Wayne should replace the spring. My suggestion would be to order one from the factory or buy one locally that is the same or maybe a little stronger.



There is another XS in the Works - Can't Wait to See It Finished



The Sun Flyer at OSH - They Promise it Will Fly this Fall

The Long-Awaited Lightning Taildragger (not a joke)

Sexy Arion Lightning Taildragger; a Beautifully-Done Homebuilder Project

Article by: [Dan Johnson](#) July 14, 2017

I readily admit I find [Arion's Lightning LS-1](#) (the Special LSA model designation) one of the most handsome in the Light-Sport fleet ... which is saying something as we enjoy dozens and dozens of quite beautiful aircraft in this sector. It's also **all-American**, referencing its design and manufacturing.



Lightning lives up to its name, running easily to the 120-knot maximum for LSA, especially when powered with a very muscular six-cylinder, 120 horsepower Jabiru 3300 powerplant. Every Lightning to date has been a tricycle gear airplane and, honestly, for most pilots, that is the right choice. However, like many aviators, I love the look of a tail dragger so when I stumbled across the one you see in the photos, I did a double take. *Whoa! That looks hot!*

What you see here is a product of seven years of work by builder/owner **Mike Lotz**. I asked him to tell me about it and he offered enough that I'm going to let him tell his story.

Mike wrote: "My wife, Kathy, and I live in Chautauqua County in western New York. I've flown a converted Piper Colt out of a small grass strip airport (D79) at the end of Chautauqua Lake since 2004. After a few years, I thought I would like something a little 'zippier.'

"In 2008, I came across the Lightning at Oshkosh. I loved the look and specs for being a Light-Sport. I spoke with company boss and designer, **Nick Otterback**, and asked about the possibility of a tail wheel version. He thought that might be a possibility down the road. "I saw Nick again the next year but still no tail wheel. However, I did schedule a demo ride. I was sold and bought my kit."

About this project, Nick wrote, "Home builders are a resourceful group. We don't offer a tailwheel yet, but Mike went and did it! **She looks so sexy with her low tail!**" "That's a big undertaking," said another Arion follower, Leroy Brandt.



How did Mike Lotz do it?

"While doing first basic construction steps, I kept toying with the tail wheel idea. I started researching plans and books: Tony Bingelis' *Sportplane Builder* and my favorite, Ladislao Pazmany's *Landing Gear Design For Light Aircraft*.

"While in construction, I decided I would commit to the tail wheel conversion. At the same time, just to see if it could be done, I decided to modify Lightning's controls to create center stick, another thing the factory had not done. (Editor's Note: *Gerd Nowack in Germany has made this center stick modification*) I thought this would make entry easier and also let my wife have her own uncluttered space. This was my first project and at the rate I was going, I figured I wasn't going to be doing too many of these so I wanted to do this one exactly how I wanted it.

"I contacted Nick and got some better clarity on center of gravity and possible wheel positions and applied them to Pazmany's formulas until everything came in within the guidelines. Theoretical weight and balance and prop clearance were also considerations. I am a retired machinist, so the metal work and fixturing was very familiar to me although I did have to 'tune' up my welding for about a year and a half before I attempted the landing gear legs and supports.

"At this time, I've got about 2,500 hours into it. Although the empty CG moved a little more than an inch aft with the tail wheel, we are still well within the envelope and Light-Sport limit with two people and 20 gallons of fuel. "I'm using the Jabiru 3300 and without the nose wheel, I hope to add a few miles an hour in cruise and lose a couple on landing."

Wisely, Mike hasn't decided if he'll do the test flight on his Lightning TD. "I've spent more time building than flying lately," Mike admitted. This is a common, smart move... to let a person other than the builder do the test flight.

Mike continued, "Buzz Rich, who is very involved with Nick at Lightning and has a ton of time in the Lightning and tail wheels, has offered to do the first flights and it would be a kick to get his take on my project if we can work it out. I'll be flying amateur built but Lightning TD will come within Light-Sport limits. "This is way more plane than I could have ever imagined for myself."

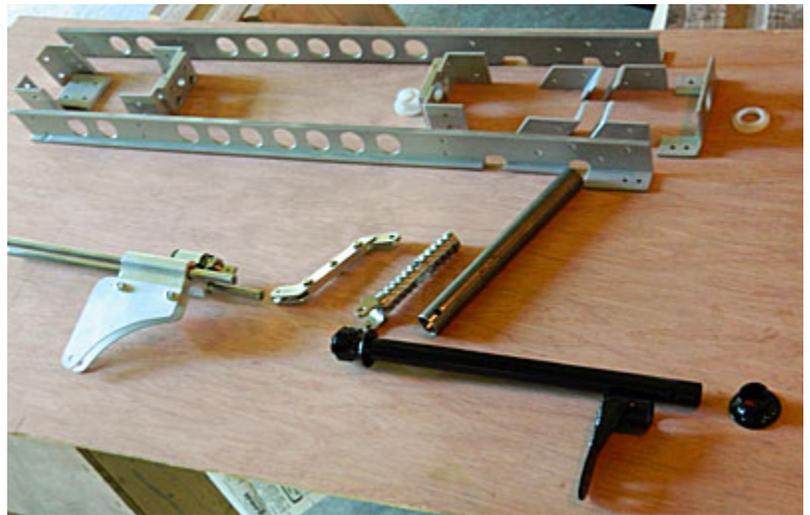


Make is both clever with technical skills and is diplomatic as he added an essential thank-you note. "Thanks to my wife Kathy for the great seats she sewed, for helping me move, lift, hold, and generally assist in the barn and for tolerating airplane parts in rooms around the house for seven years now. In fact, I think she misses the propeller not being in the living room anymore."

Mike also added thanks to Nick, Mark, and Buzz at Arion Aircraft.

So, now that you know Mike's story, what will you do this weekend?

(Editor's Note: This is an interesting set of modifications to the Lightning design. Just one of these changes is a lot to deal with. The center stick seems to have a pretty short throw, which could make handling an issue for someone that is not used to a very responsive aircraft. The Lightning is a pretty responsive aircraft, so the short throw will make it interesting indeed. I am sure Buz, or whoever does first flight, will look this plane over very carefully before they head down the runway for takeoff.)



For Sale:

N320XS Arion Aircraft 2014 XS Demonstrator

150 hrs. TT, 160 hp Superior XP320 Dynon Skyview, Autopilot, ADS-B, Garmin SL40, 406 ELT, Garmin 796

\$100,000 OBO



N335CE

2009 Light sport Compliant E-AB, 433 hrs. TT

GRT EFIS, EIS6000 EMS, Garmin SL-40, Garmin GTX-327, Autopilot, MK2 tail upgrade

\$84,900 OBO located @Arion



N624MZ

2009 Zenith 601XL-B, 67 hrs. TT, LSA Compliant

April 2017 Annual, GRT EFIS EIS-6000, Garmin SL-40, Garmin GTX-327, TruTrack Autopilot

\$47,900 Located @ Arion



N396JC

2007 LSA compliant E-AB, 155 hrs. TT
GRT EFIS, Becker radio and transponder. TruTrack Autopilot EIS-6000 EMS

\$74,900 OBO, Located @ Arion.



N214DG

Experimental – Light Sport Compliant, Located at Geronimo Experimental Aircraft, in Marana, AZ

Asking \$87,000



Contact Lightning West for details and more information. They also have a Jabiru aircraft for sale.

N830LW

2007 Light Sport Compliant E-AB, 63 hrs. TT
GRT EFIS & EIS, Garmin SL-40 & GTX-327

\$55,900 OBO Located in WI



N297S

2009 LSA compliant, 200 hrs. TT
GRT EFIS, Garmin SL-40 and GTX-327, autopilot. located South Carolina.

\$84,000 OBO



N272TH

2009 Arion Lightning E-AB, 285 hrs. TT
Icom A-210 Radio, winglets, Dual (pedals, brakes, PTT, Trim, stick), Located in Sapulpa, OK

\$46,400 USD



Upcoming Events

11th Annual Triple Tree Aerodrome Fly-In
September 6 – 10, 2017



[Airport Identifier SC00](#)

Woodruff, SC

AOPA Fly-In

September 08 – 09, 2017



AOPA™

your freedom to *fly*

[University of Oklahoma Westheimer Airport, Norman, OK \(KOUN\)](#)

Norman, OK

Lightning Homecoming - Shelbyville, TN September 29 - 30, 2017



Airport Identifier - KSYI



Last Year Getting Ready to Fly Out to the Lightning Homecoming

Lightning of the Quarter and Pilot Spotlight Guidelines and Question

The following questions are to be used for your submittals of the Lightning of the Quarter and Pilot Spotlight articles. Every single Lightning out there deserves to be in the Lightning of the Quarter. Every single pilot has a story to tell. I hope you take some time and used these questions and guidelines to tell your story for the rest of us. Although similar, the stories for a Lightning of the Quarter and the Pilot Spotlight are just a bit different.

Before publishing any story, I will likely make some edits for spelling, punctuation, and clarity. So, with these guidelines, I hope I get a lot of input for future issues of Hangar Talk.

Lightning of the Quarter Questions:

If you are interested in submitting your jet for the Lightning of the Quarter, just use the questions below and submit some nice pictures of your plane. A picture of the panel is also interesting, at least it is to me. Take a look at the prior Lightning of the Quarter articles and use them as guidelines when you put your story together. Your story will be great - they all are.

Questions for Lightning of the Quarter.

1. Do you have an online build log? If so, and would like to share it, provide the URL.
2. Where did you get your interest in aviation and what are your earliest memories of wanting to fly?
3. Does your spouse share your interest and does he/she fly as well?
4. What made you choose the Arion Lightning for your aircraft?
5. Did you build it or buy it?
6. Is it an S-LSA, E-LSA, or E-AB? If it is an experimental, does it meet Light Sport requirements?
7. If you built your plane did you build it at the factory, a dealer, or at home?
8. How was the build process?
9. What type of flying do you do with your jet?
10. Have you flown it to a major fly-in? Which ones?
11. Finally, include some (3 or 4) nice pictures of you and your plane and some captions for each picture.

Pilot Spotlight Questions:

If you would like to be highlighted in the magazine, we do that in a Pilot Spotlight article. Each of us have unique stories about our aviation interests, careers, and/or hobbies. Each story deserves telling and they are all interesting to me.

1. Where are you from? Hometown? Current residence?
2. How did you get started in aviation? When did you begin being interested in flying? Why did you want to become a pilot?
3. What were the circumstances for your first airplane ride? Explain in detail.
4. What was the first plane you flew / soloed?
5. What is your favorite aircraft to fly?
6. Did you have to pay for your flight lessons yourself? If so, how did you do that?
7. Tell about your education. If you have a college degree, where did you go to college? What did you study? Do you have any advanced degrees?
8. Did you work in the aviation industry? If so, what was your occupation? If not, what was your occupation?
9. Did you fly commercially? Explain who you flew for, what aircraft you flew, how long did you fly commercially?
10. Were you in the military? Which service, when, how long? Did you fly in the military?
11. When did you meet your spouse? Was she/he supportive of your flying?
12. Have you owned an airplane before the Lightning? How many? What models? How long have you owned them? Which ones did you like best and why? Worst?
13. Have you ever built an airplane? What model(s)? Why did you choose that / those model(s)?
14. What are your favorite aviation events?
15. Have you attended AirVenture or Sun-N-Fun? How many times?
16. What are your other hobbies? Tell about them in some detail.

Final Thoughts



Donna and Me After Landing in Madison, WI

This year, Donna and I flew our little C-152 to Wisconsin for AirVenture 2017. Total time, 29.9 hours of flight, 16 stops, 15 of them for fuel, one to fix the transponder, and we visited friends and family along the way. Four days up, four days back, headwinds both ways. It's always an adventure. Yellow Bird, yes, that's her name, now has a zero-time engine and new propeller. She is also now IFR certified with a PS Engineering audio panel and a Garmin 430W Nav/Com. We kept the old (but really great) Collins Micro-Line radios for Com 2 and Nav 2. So, other than stopping at Merritt Island Airport (KCOI) to get the transponder fixed, the trip was uneventful. Frank, at Sebastian Communications had us in the air again pretty quick. Just a connection re-set and tweaking the radio frequency and we were off again.

There were some interesting moments, like Atlanta Center clearing us to FL230, and using our new ForeFlight Scout to avoid traffic, taking off every time at gross weight, etc. Two adults, a small tool kit, spare oil, minimal clothes, water, and snacks only allowed a fuel load of 18 gallons to stay at or below gross weight. So, we could only fly about 200 nm before we had to stop for fuel. But you meet a lot of nice folks at little airports.

I got to see a bunch of old friends this year at AirVenture and I got to make some new friends as well. It is one of the things that makes the trip so much fun. This year, RJ Seigel invited Donna and me to the deck of the One Aviation tent for the Saturday night airshow. It was a little cooler than we expected and the beer and wine shut down before we got there, but the show was great and the company better.

I am still looking for Pilot Spotlight and Lightning of the Quarter candidates. Please consider taking a little time to answer one or both of the questionnaires and sending me the data with some good pictures.

Blue Skies,
Dennis W. Wilt
dwwilt@aol.com