



Third Quarter 2015
Volume 8, Issue 4
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Letter from the Editor:

Hi folks, I am a little late getting this issue out. Work sometimes gets in the way of fun things, like writing the magazine and heaven forbid, flying. This magazine will focus on the Lightning Homecoming. Unfortunately the weather was just bad, there is no way to sugar coat it, and it was just bad. We had low visibility and misty rain the entire weekend. I had to drive up to Shelbyville and it is always a disappointment when you can't fly.

However, even though we didn't fly, and there were fewer folks than I would have liked, we had a great time anyway. I got to meet several people I have not met before and that is always interesting and fun.

We played Giant Jenga, had a pizza party, and in general enjoyed each other's company. Pete Krotje gave a very nice talk about the Jabiru Engines. I always learn something when he gives a talk. It is always nice to see the Jabiru USA folks, too.

Some of us also went to The Beechcraft Heritage Museum in Tullahoma, TN and really enjoyed the aircraft that were there.

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

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Lightning of the Quarter - Ed and Caelie Skalniak's Jet



Lightning of the Quarter

Article by Ed and Caelie Skalniak

Flying "The JET" 10-12-2015

I am a long time sailplane pilot, and grew up flying gliders. I started flying sailplanes as a young punk back in 1977. Today I am an older punk, and still love to fly.

I met my wife when I lived in the Washington DC area, and knew when we dated, how she loved sailing on the Long Island Sound. I invited her to go sailing, in a sailplane. She loved it, took a few flying lessons in Maryland, and our life together, launched.

Life took us in many directions, and I needed another 10 years to get "us" back into aviation. We loosely talked about flying over the years, and then in 1994, on one birthday, I gave her a birthday card, and inside was a certificate for a full training course to get her sailplane private pilot's license. I told her, I paid cash, it was nonrefundable, and she had to go!

She loved it so much, that she flew every weekend, Saturday's AND Sunday's, and managed to take off a couple of weekdays to get in as much stick time as possible. On weekends between lessons, she hopped in with me, as we took a two place sailplane for our two hour flight, landed, and she would hop in with the instructor to take a couple more lessons at the end of the day. It was an all flying year, every year, for the next 11 years.

With many 5 hour plus soaring flights, and many soaring vacations towing our ships out west to soar the mountains in top conditions, with some flights reaching altitudes of 26,000 in mountain wave, we made the most of soaring, every summer. But the winter months kept us grounded, living in Chicago.

My wife is the one that started to talk about flying during non-soaring season, something that I imagined, but never thought we would be able to do. We started our power flying with a Piper Warrior, then updated to a Cessna 177.



Keep in mind, many of us started flying with paper maps, as did my wife. Then came GPS! In the automotive industry, GPS stands for "Global Positioning Satellites". In sailplane flight, GPS means, "Going Pretty Straight" as you change directions to find thermals, then continue on course. In powered aviation, it stands for

"Going Perfectly Straight", like flying "that way Tonto", for the next 200 nautical.

Power flying was unique to both of us, as we could fly in a straight line, reach a destination and return. Cool! We both rediscovered flying, again and didn't have to face those long, cold winters grounded.

At some point we realized was we would retire one day, and wanted to build a fun plane. It took us five years of searching at Oshkosh (and probably drove Mark a little batty with all our questions). Since we liked the design and shape of sailplanes, our shopping list came down to the Lightning. After talking to the Lightning team for 3 years, we finally ordered our jet!

Now came the build plan. We didn't want to spend 10 years building a plane, so researched build facilities. We choose the Shelbyville build center. We wanted a place to build the kit, driving distance to home, and in warmer climate than Chicago. Tennessee worked best for us. Between Nick, Mark, Jason, Mike and the team, they watched over my back to make sure I did it right.

We built "The Jet" as an EAB, and Light Sport compliant. The build process was at a spirited pace, and at eight hours plus hours a day, was an education. I had built many model planes, and flying models, thus this was the same process, but at a larger scale. We did the first part in December, then came back in February to finish. Our plane was licensed March 1, 2012.



We had owned and selected instruments for 6 sailplanes, so we knew what instruments worked best for us. We had visited Grand Rapids Technology every year at Oshkosh, and they spent time with us showing their flying screens. Since GRT was located in Michigan, what I called "strangling distance" from us, I wanted to work with them in equipping the avionics for "The Jet."



We fly our plane for pleasure. Many flights to visit friends and family, and so far, most within 400 NM of home.

We always keep a list of weekly fly-ins, and manage to make many breakfast and lunch fly-in's that are within a couple of hours of home. We made it to a couple of the Mount Vernon IL fly-ins, but work keeps getting in the way for both of us.

I am fortunate that my better half, "Caelie (Michaela), likes to fly, and today, we make time to fly, every weekend. In the summer, we still squeeze in some after work flights, just to practice the landings, as we found out Jet lands like our gliders, we fly it to the deck, and wait for touchdown.



As glider pilots, we meet up with other glider pilots we know, and they always inquire about our "motor glider". We always mention the main advantage is to fly GPS (going perfectly straight), and this gets their antennas up. Keep in mind, glider pilot stories are like fishermen stories and they all start the same way, "...there I was..." Flying direct to a destination would be unusual for our glider pilot friends. The only time they fly GPS is out west in the mountains, following the range in an almost GPS fashion.

The Lightning has been the best kit plane to build, and is so much fun to fly. I talk with pilots we know, and ultimately compare flying notes and characteristics. The fuel burn gets our friends attention. When we flew our Cardinal, like all pilots we had our milk-run routes. We found with our Jet, that we flew faster than the Cardinal, and flying the same milk-run route, we used less than half the fuel. Not bad for a hobby flight.

We know we are blessed that we can afford to do this hobby, and flying "The Jet" fits us for now. This is not our last kit to build, but no matter what we build next, "The Jet" will always be there for fun flights.

Edward and Caelie (Michaela) Skalniak

(More pictures and some editor's comments.)

I met Caelie at Oshkosh and later met Ed. You could not want to meet a nicer couple and you can tell they are both enthusiastic about flying. Having a spouse that is a

pilot myself, I always have known I was blessed to be married to a pilot. And Donna owned a Cardinal RG for nearly 20 years. The Cardinal is a wonderful airplane and I miss the capabilities that it had. Mostly the load carrying capability. I am sure that Ed and Caelie also miss their fixed gear version for the same reason. I wish they both had been able to attend the Homecoming, they would have had a great time.



A nice modification for a tow bar.



Ed's First Flight at Shelbyville



An engine test at home

Lightning Homecoming 2015

Article by Dennis W. Wilt

As I mentioned in the opening, the weather was a bit sketchy for this year's homecoming. No one was able to fly in, but several folks drove in. Earl Ferguson, Buz Rich, Andrew Milan, and Val Albert and his son. There was me, of course and I am sure I did not list everyone that came in to the homecoming. While I was there, I got to go visit the paint shop and meet the folks that paint the planes for Arion Aircraft. They do beautiful work and as you have seen, their paint jobs are very, very nice.

We also travelled to Tullahoma and visited the Beechcraft Heritage Museum. There are a lot of historical aircraft at the museum and if you get a chance, you should go. Just after the Homecoming, AOPA had one of their fly-ins there at the museum and airport.

We also had a dinner at Mark and Claire's home like last year. They are always great hosts and we had a wonderful time eating local BBQ and having a beer or two.

The following are some pictures and highlights during the event.



Watching Mya and Cale Play Giant Jenga



Pete Giving the Jabiru Engine Talk

The Factory Floor



The Front of the Beechcraft Museum



Staggerwing S/N 1 (Note Fixed Gear)



A Couple of Beautiful Staggerwings



1929 Travel Air Mystery Ship



A Cutaway Bonanza (built for a court case)



The Beech Starship



Cockpit of the Starship



A Selfie in the Cockpit



Notice the Crew for Nick's RV-6

News from the Factory

There are a lot of things happening at the factory. The first Lightning with Air Conditioning (that I know about anyway). An Electric Lightning is in the process and two Lightnings with O-320 variants (one is an Aero Sport Power IO-340 and the other is a Superior IO-320). The IO-340 is a modified-320 bored to an IO-340 and produces at least 180 HP. The word is it tested on the Dyno at 185 HP. This is the plane being built by Nick Coreolla from Clearwater, FL and it is the one with a Flight Line Air Conditioner. The IO-320 is moving along as well. The electric Lightning is a contract from Aero Electric Aircraft Corporation (AEAC) to build the fuselage for a two seat solar powered electric trainer aircraft. I'll see everyone from the factory at Sebring for the LSA Expo. Here are some pictures and captions:



Stopping by the Local Aircraft Supply Store
While Bringing Neal Coreolla's Jet from the Paint Shop



After Inspection, Before First Flight - Nice Panel



How About Some Air Conditioning?



The Next IO-320 Powered XS



An Electric Lightning Moving Right Along



A Hangar Full of Planes

News From The Dealers

From Lightning Aircraft West:

Lightning Aircraft West is always on the move. After finishing at Oshkosh, they were off to the Copper State Fly-In. Here are a few pictures from their Blog at their website. [Lightning Aircraft West](#)



Four Lightnings at Copper State



Greg Giving a Forum at Copper State



Lightnings Taxiing Out at Copper State

(Editor's Note: The following is from the Blog) The [Airmaster](#) high Performance propeller system has really performed as promised. Three of our pilots have installed this system and are very pleased with take-off performance. Greg presented a forum on this propeller system at Copper State Fly-in, October 22-24, 2015. This constant speed propeller is manufactured in New Zealand using the Sensenich blades. Some technical information and pictures follow:



AP420 Hub

- Two blade
- Fully machined, one piece hub
- Precision pitch change mechanism
- Simple setup
- Electric actuation
- Removable blade assembly cartridge
- Full feathering options



Airmaster Propeller System

- AP420F Hub
- Sensenich 64in blades for Jabiru 3300
- Jabiru 2in extension kit
- 9in spinner
- AC200 Feathering controller
- 2 meter wiring with Jabiru brush block mount kit



Controller

Current Lightning Dealers or Representatives



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



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



Mid Atlantic Region: Green Landings Flight Center, Ryan Gross, 309 Takeoff Dr., Hedgesville WV 25427, 304-754-6010, www.greenlandings.com



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



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



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My Jet at Sun-N-Fun 2012

News From Builders and Flyers

Did Gerd Fly Yet?



Editor's Note: *The last I heard was that Gerd was ready to fly, but he was still waiting for the German equivalent of the FAA to give him his airworthiness certificate. A nice picture Gerd, missed you and Uli at the Lightning Homecoming*

From Gerd: Here is an unpublished pic of the C/S prop from GT Propellers, Italy. Yesterday we measured the static thrust and got 362kg eq. to 520lbs driven by the ULPower 390iS, 148hp@2800RPM.

A Tech Tip from Linda Mathias Taken from the Lightning List

Dear Jabiru engine owners,

I have been experiencing a strange phenomenon: oil on the top of my dipstick. After thoroughly checking the engine for leaks and finding none, I discovered the cause is capillary action up the dipstick through the plastic cap. I fixed it by pushing Liquid Nail around the aluminum tube opening in the plastic cap and letting it dry thoroughly before flying; cleaning off any excess keeps it still looking good. If you look at the bottom of the cap, you can see just enough space around the aluminum for a bit of oil to go through. I think any heat resistant sealant would work; the Liquid Nail held through a 2.5 hour flight but if needed, I will add some more and keep a close eye on it.

Blue skies,

Linda Mathias
Lightning with Jabiru 3300

And a reply from Rob:

I had the same for years. Fixed it using Loctite 243, same result. This is pretty common I hear.

And Rick:

I used a little red RTV on mine.

Editor's Note: *If you would like to send your information to me for publication. If you are building or just flying and want to share, please send your pictures and an e-mail about your Lightning to dwwilt@aol.com.*

Upcoming Events

US Sport Aviation Expo - Sebring, FL
January 20 - 23, 2016



[LSA Expo - Sebring, FL](#)
Airport Identifier - KSEF

Sun - N- Fun Fly-In - Lakeland, FL
April 05 - 10, 2016



[Sun-N-Fun](#)
Airport Identifier - KLAL

Lightning of the Quarter and Pilot Spotlight Guidelines and Questions

As I worked with Ed and Caelie Skalniak, it became very obvious to me that I needed to provide some kind of assistance to the Lightning owners and builders that would like to have their airplane and/or pilot story in the Hangar Talk magazine. So, I looked through the past issues and put together a couple of sets of questions for each type of story. 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 on-line build log? If so, and would 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 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.

Questions for Pilot Spotlight:

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



The adventure continues. Each day is a continuation on this adventure we travel. The trip to Shelbyville, TN this year only highlighted that truth. I was able to meet with our friends at Arion Aircraft and Jabiru USA. They are all great people and it is wonderful to be able to call them my friends. I also got a chance to meet some new friends, Andy Milan who has shown an interest in helping with the Magazine. I will welcome that assistance. He worked on a new template using Microsoft Word™ and I think it looks very good. I tried Microsoft Publisher™ for a while, but the software is like using Word 10 years ago. They just have not kept it up to the same level and capability as Word.

I really enjoyed visiting [The Beechcraft Heritage Museum](#) in Tullahoma, TN. The picture above is a cutaway Staggerwing. You can really look at the manufacturing techniques and systems on the plane. I spent way too long looking at the beautiful craftsmanship displayed on this airplane. If you ever get to this area, you have to stop in and visit the museum.

Visiting the paint shop was a good thing for me. The folks there were very nice and their work is as good as any I have seen. It is comparable to that of a nice show car.

Watching Cale and Mya growing up and playing with each other is fun for me. They are both nice kids and Cale is certainly all boy. Mom is never going to be able to relax around that young man. He is a handful, but in a good way.

On my way out of Shelbyville, I drove to Lenoir City, TN near Knoxville to visit an old friend and meet her husband. Unfortunately, I had not had the chance to meet him before even though we both worked at Rockwell Collins for a time. Donna, my friend, and I used to be dive buddies. Unfortunately my friend has ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) and as we all know that is not a good situation. But, she is still cheerful and pleasant and a beautiful lady. I hope I get to sit and talk to her more in the future, but this life is an adventure from which we will eventually awake. Things will be different then, hopefully even better.

Blue Skies,

Dennis W. Wilt
dwwilt@aol.com