



# The ThunderWord

Thunderbird Field EAA Chapter 1217 October 2019

Scottsdale, Arizona

## **PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

Greetings from my corner of the hangar! At last month's meeting Nancy Coenen Christensen told us an interesting story about being in the audience at Cape Canaveral July 16, 1969 when Apollo Eleven blasted off on its journey to the moon. It was really interesting to hear her stories of being part of the NASA family and what they went through.

Flying season is just about here with nice temps and clear skies. I am finally back to having weekends off so I hope to see everyone at the local fly-ins and breakfast runs,

See you at the October meeting!

*Curtis*

## **OCTOBER CHAPTER MEETING**

The October meeting of Thunderbird Field EAA Chapter 1217 will be held on Thursday, October 17th, beginning at 7 pm.

This month's guest speaker will be Chapter member Dave Kujawa who is going to give a talk about EAA's 50 years at Oshkosh.

The location for our monthly meetings is The Scottsdale Airport Terminal Building, 15000 North Airport Drive, upstairs in the Thunderbird room.

Guests are always welcome!

## **FUTURE GUEST SPEAKERS**

Now that we have this cool meeting venue, it's time to get some great presentations! November brings back an interesting speaker from our Chapter's past. Bob Funk is going to tell the story of the Funk Aircraft Corporation. Bob has only done this presentation two other times and says this is the final curtain for this talk. It is a very emotional story for him.

For future meetings we have Travis Foss going to talk about flying a DC-3 from Arizona to the Normandy Celebration as well as a talk from Otteson Propellers on their company's history and what they do.

## **HOLIDAY PARTY**

We have set the time and date for this year's holiday party. Sunday December 8th starting at four in the afternoon. Bill and Pam Unternaehrer are going to host the event at their home near Greenway road and twentieth street. Chapter 1217 is providing the munchies you just need to bring a cask of yee favorite grog to share.

## **DUDE WHERE'S MY PLANE**

The pilot and owner of a 1945 Grumman TBM Avenger is asking for help locating the airplane he was forced to bail out of and abandon during a flight last year. He's willing to pay \$20,000 to anyone who finds the airplane. That's not as easy as it sounds. Ron Carlson, explains... "I just want to refresh my offer of \$20,000 cash to find my still missing 1945 Grumman TBM Avenger. Many of you are probably familiar with the story, but for those who are not, it crashed a year and a half ago after a catastrophic engine failure and fire, in early May of 2018. The plane is somewhere northeast of Fort Mojave which is a suburb of White River Arizona

## **ADS-B INTEL**

When Chapter 1217 member Jack Pollack installed the UAavionics Tail Beacon on his Chipmunk it looked like an easy install, two wires and two screws. What could be easier? After running some new wiring, as the old wires had no slack, which involved pulling off the tail cone fairing. Of course the screw spacing was different because it was built in

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Canada so that had to be dwelt with. The final straw, and takeaway for the rest of us, is the unit failed when he did the set up on his phone.

On Monday he called the manufacturer and actually talked to a real person. They said

some iPhones/operating systems require you to put your iPhone in the **airplane mode** when doing the setup. It seems they forgot to put that in the directions. A quick trip to the hangar and they were right it passed the test and was ready to fly. Jack wanted to pass along this bit of tribal knowledge.



### RDD Enterprises' LX-7

#### RDD UPGRADES LANCAIR TO LX-7

by Mark Phelps

RDD Enterprises was founded in 2006 by partners David McCrae, Eric Schmidlin, and Mark Mahnke, who all liked the pressurized Lancair IV-P, but felt it could be significantly safer with more modern aerodynamics, manufacturing processes, pressurization system, and other enhancements.

The result is the RDD LX7, available in four iterations: 350-hp piston in retractable or fixed gear; or a 500-shp PT6A-powered turboprop version, also with a choice of fixed or retractable gear. The LX7's single-wing is new, featuring dual-slotted flaps not found on the IV-P. The entire tail is also new. Multiple refinements give the cabin more room and comfort, and the RDD partners added a ballistic whole-airplane parachute.

But what really sets RDD's program apart is the business plan. RDD will start with already certified airframes, then "modify" them by removing the wings and tail and effectively

remanufacturing the entire airplane, while retaining its original production certificate. There are currently about 250 registered Lancair IV-Ps, each one a potential "donor" airplane.

With improved aerodynamics and more consistent manufacturing tolerances, RDD believes its LX7 will have the same top-speed performance but greatly improved slow-speed qualities, making it safer to operate. The estimated cost, depending on the condition of the donor aircraft RDD is able to acquire, is \$830,000 for the piston version and \$980,000 for the turboprop.

#### ELECTROLITE ULTRALIGHT

by Mark Huber

Aeromarine LSA will be offering its single-seat "Electrolite", Part 103 electric-powered ultralight beginning in the fourth quarter, it announced at EAA Airventure. The aircraft has an optional \$10,000 remote control unit which would allow an instructor to take control

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of the aircraft from the ground, maneuver the aircraft, land it, or even deploy the ballistic recovery parachute.

The Electrolite is based on the Zigolo gas-powered ultralight made in Italy, and the electric motors will come from a Chinese supplier. Aeromarine principal Chip Erwin said the aircraft would be available either as a quick-build kit for \$19,900 or finished for \$24,900.

“This answers the question of how you train someone in an aircraft that does not even require a pilot’s license,” Erwin said, adding that the responsiveness of electric power made it “ideal” for an ultralight aircraft. It could be equipped with a small video camera and even biometrics on the student to make it a fully wired trainer. He added that it “was not a big step” to make the aircraft fully autonomous in countries where that is permitted. (The FAA does not allow autonomous aircraft under Part 103.) Tests

so far have shown that the controller-to-aircraft range is about 500 yards, Erwin said. The lightweight servos needed to make the aircraft remote-pilot optional weigh about a quarter-pound each and produced no control friction at 30 mph.

Erwin pointed out that the wing-mounted batteries are designed for quick change and are jettisonable in the event of fire. Recharging time is 2.5 hours and endurance is up to one hour. The aircraft stalls at 19 knots, has a maximum speed of 39 knots, and a takeoff roll of about one-hundred feet. Erwin says the aircraft mushes as opposed to a hard break stall. He said bringing electric power to the aircraft was a good fit.

“It’s such a perfect match to get rid of the two-stroke engine,” Erwin said Aeromarine would begin taking \$2,000 deposits for the aircraft later this year and that plans are to move aircraft production to the United States.



**B-29 called “Doc” at DVT**

### **The B-29**

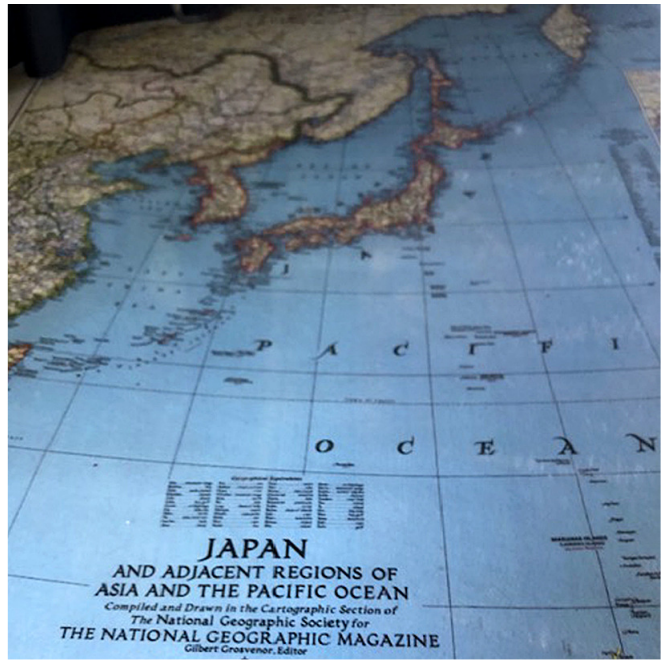
The B-29 was the largest and technically most advanced bomber of World War II. It featured pressurized and heated crew compartments, remote controlled guns with computer assisted aiming, and four 2,200 hp engines. The development of the B-29 cost more than that of the atomic bomb.

The B-29 could carry 20,000 lb of bombs, had a top speed of 327 mph and sufficient range to allow it the carry out missions from Sipan, Tinian, or Guam to Japan and back.

Gary Hedges went for a ride in “Doc” the B-29 when it was at DVT. He took the B-29 pictures in this newsletter.



**Nose Art on the B-29 “Doc”**



**Map of Pacific and Japan**

## **FIRST FLIGHT NEAR FOR SWITCHBLADE**

by Mark Huber

Samson recently received a U.S. patent for the Switchblade’s folding wing spar, which allows the wing to fold inside the vehicle during driving mode. Samson has also designed and constructed the vehicle’s transmission, propeller disconnect, installed a turbo engine, conducted static wing, and boom testing to Part 23 FAA standards and tested the fly-by-wire rudder system.

Further testing of that system to check fault modes is scheduled and first flight could occur within a few weeks. The company spokesman, Bousfield added that additional electrical work needs to be completed for flight testing and that the starter motor needs to be replaced. Once that happens there will be several day’s worth of harmonic testing of the engine and transmission, followed by taxi and high-speed ground testing.

Bousfield said Samson is working with Motus Motorcycle Engines to purchase the assets of his company’s preferred engine manufacturer. Motus, of Birmingham, Alabama, who makes a turbocharged, liquid-cooled 190-hp V4 “baby block” engine popular with motorcycle

enthusiasts, that will power the vehicle to speeds up to 125 mph on the ground and 190 mph in the air. The engine burns 91 octane auto fuel. Bousfield called the engine “bulletproof” and said that acquiring Motus would help keep the cost of Switchblade engines under \$10,000. “Buying the engine company will help us keep our costs in line,” he said.

Samson also recently released more performance targets for the Switchblade. They include a range of 450 miles, a maximum useful load of 544 pounds, a fuel capacity of 30 gallons, a fuel burn of 40 mpg (highway) and nine gph in the air, a stall speed (dirty) of 67 mph, a takeoff distance of 1,100 feet, and landing distance of 1,000 feet. The two-seat, three-wheeled Switchblade will initially be offered as a \$140,000 kitplane with a factory builder assistance program. The company plans to begin taking formal deposits after the vehicle’s first flight. It currently holds “reservations” for 982 copies of the Switchblade.



**Pilot's Position in the B-29**



**B-29 Engineer's Station**



**"Front Office" of the B-29**



**Closer view of the B-29, Note the ladders to go aboard**

### **AMELIA EARHART SEARCH**

The holy grail of all missing aircraft is Amelia Earhart's Lockheed Electra which went missing on a round-the-world flight in July of 1937.

There are multiple theories about her disappearance, but most believe she landed on Nikumaroro island located in the Phoenix group of islands in the central Pacific. Chapter member John Rippinger was on an expedition to the island two years ago with National Geographic and the TIGHAR group looking for aircraft parts underwater and bone fragments on a site where they believe she died

Fred Hiebert from National Geographic convinced Robert Ballard (the guy that found the Titanic) to come take a look down at a depth of 15,000 feet for the aircraft. That was in August and National Geographic will have a two hour special on October 20 to tell us what Ballard found and explain TIGHAR's logic for where Amelia died. Make sure that you tune in to find out the answers to an 82 year old mystery.

# FOR SALE

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## SKYBOLT

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## LONGEZ AND SONEX

Tom Partin has decided to stop flying and has two airplanes for sale at Thunder Ridge air park (AZ28), a 180hp LongEz and a 120hp Sonex. Anyone interested can contact Bertha Partin at [bmpartin@gmail.com](mailto:bmpartin@gmail.com)

## GLASAIR III

Lynn Babcock has decided it's time to sell his Glasair III. This aircraft has every upgrade from speed brakes to airconditioning and cruises at 220 kts. He is asking \$215,000. Lynn is the original builder and the plane has been based at Scottsdale Airport its entire life. 480-227-5945.

## THATCHER CX-4 PLANS & BUILDERS MANUAL

New, never used, donated to our Chapter.  
Curtis 602 710-4494

## ONEX, WELL-EQUIPED LSA FOR SALE

ONEX, folding-wing, fighter-like, single-seat, tricycle-gear LSA, an 85%-scale Sonex. Powered by 100 HP, turbo-charged VW engine. Dynon SkyView, 2020-compliant ADS-B Out avionics. Ipad for navigation fits in center console. With wings folded, Onex shares space in small T-hangar behind one wing of RV-12. Offered at \$21,500. Denny Myrick 480-213-4906. [Dennymyrick@me.com](mailto:Dennymyrick@me.com)...

## COOL PLANES FOR SALE

Only flown by little old ladies to church on Sundays. <http://captainbillywalker.com/aircraft-for-sale/aircraft-for-sale>

## CESSNA 172'S FOR RENT

Two IFR Cessna 172s for rent at Chandler. Owned by Chapter member Pat McGarry. Contact Chris Hoel for more information and to schedule [birdgangft@gmail.com](mailto:birdgangft@gmail.com)

## RV-4 PARTIALLY BUILT KIT

\$13,500 Lycoming O-290-D2, kit for \$3,000 or \$16,000 for both. Bill Refrow 602-843-9862 [w7lov@cox.net](mailto:w7lov@cox.net)

## LYCOMING O-360 A1A

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## GARMIN GDL39 PORTABLE GPS

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