

# Thoughts Aloft~::~



## EAA CHAPTER 383 NEWSLETTER

### Banquet night

Our annual banquet is set for March 17<sup>th</sup> at Machut's Supper Club in Two Rivers. Plan to show up about 6:00 or so and dine around 6:30, give or take. Dinner selection is off the menu so you can have whatever strikes your fancy. Gary has arranged to have us in a side room on the main floor so we will be away from the noise of the general public.

It's been quite a few years since we had our banquet here but our previous experience was pleasant enough so this time should also turn out well. Besides, they have a lot of good food at Machut's.

All the locals know how to get to Machut's but, just in case you are new to the area, they are located on Highway 42 North, essentially just on the north side of Two Rivers (3911 Lincoln Avenue).

### Spring on the way?

Well, from a pretty much snowless December and early January followed by a thoroughly frigid February we've had about enough winter. Fairly predictably, we have now gotten the snowy part of the season into the picture as well. The end of February and the start of March seem to be the parts of the year

that bring us the most snow, usually the heavy wet stuff, too. This year it seems that the plows were at work on the airport about every other day for the last couple of weeks.



The recent warm spell is a clear sign that better days are ahead. Besides, it is practically mandated that the snow be gone soon because the City starts brush pickup in only a few weeks!

### New hangar construction

Following a number of inquiries regarding new hangar construction, Lakeshore Aviation's Curt Drumm and airport manager Chuck Behnke have put together some representative pricing and will be hosting a meeting with a local hangar construction firm. Discounts will be available depending on the number of hangars constructed. There are at least 25 hangars sites currently available on the north end of the airport. Interested parties should pick up a quotation booklet at Lakeshore Aviation.

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383 THIS MONTH		
MAR 6	TUE	Nagirroc Flyers-1930 hrs
MAR 14	WED	EAA 383 meeting-1930 hrs
MAR 17	SAT	EAA 383 Annual banquet, Machut's in Two Rivers, 6:00 p.m.+

All meetings are at the Chapter Clubhouse unless otherwise noted – Second Wednesday of each month

# Happy St. Patrick's Day!

## *From the PRESIDENT -*

This is real hangar flying, unbelievable. Enjoy and Seeya at the meeting.

KJM

(Excerpted to fit the available space. Ed.)

### **Mach 3.18 In-Flight Breakup of an SR-71 Blackbird**

By Bill Weaver, Chief Test Pilot, Lockheed.

Among professional aviators, there's a well-worn saying: Flying is simply hours of boredom punctuated by moments of stark terror. But I don't recall too many periods of boredom during my 30-year career with Lockheed, most of which was spent as a test pilot. By far, the most memorable flight occurred on Jan. 25, 1966. Jim Zwyer, a Lockheed flight-test specialist, and I were evaluating systems on an SR-71 Blackbird test from Edwards. We also were investigating procedures designed to reduce trim drag and improve high-Mach cruise performance. The latter involved flying with the center-of-gravity (CG) located further aft than normal, reducing the Blackbird's longitudinal stability. We took off from Edwards at 11:20 a.m. and completed the mission's first leg without incident. After refueling from a KC-135 tanker, we turned eastbound, accelerated to a Mach 3.2 cruise speed and climbed to 78,000 ft., our initial cruise-climb altitude. Several minutes into cruise, the right engine inlet's automatic control system malfunctioned, requiring a switch to manual control.

On the planned test profile, we entered a programmed 35-deg. bank turn to the right. An immediate unstart occurred on the right engine, forcing the aircraft to roll further right and start to pitch up. I jammed the control stick as far left and forward as it would go. No response. I instantly knew we were in for a wild ride. I attempted to tell Jim what was happening and to stay with the airplane until we reached a lower speed and altitude. I didn't think the chances of surviving an ejection at Mach 3.18 and 78,800 ft. were very good. However, g-forces built up so rapidly that my words came out garbled and unintelligible, as confirmed later by the cockpit voice recorder. The cumulative effects of system malfunctions, reduced longitudinal stability, increased angle-of-attack in the turn, supersonic speed, high altitude and other factors imposed forces on the airframe that exceeded flight control authority and the stability augmentation system's ability to restore control. Everything seemed to unfold in slow motion. I learned later the time from event onset to catastrophic departure from controlled flight was only 2-3 seconds. Still trying to communicate with Jim, I blacked out, succumbing to extremely high g-forces.

The sound of rushing air and what sounded like straps flapping in the wind confirmed I was falling, but I couldn't see anything. My pressure suit's face plate had frozen over and I was staring at a layer of ice. The pressure suit was inflated, so I knew an emergency oxygen cylinder in the seat kit attached to my parachute harness was functioning. It not only supplied breathing oxygen, but also pressurized the suit, preventing my blood from boiling at extremely high altitudes. I didn't appreciate it at the time, but the suit's pressurization had also provided physical protection from intense buffeting and g-forces. That inflated suit had become my own escape capsule.

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### CHAPTER OFFICERS

#### PRESIDENT

Karl Meyer  
1608 21<sup>st</sup> Street  
Two Rivers, WI 54241  
553-1207

#### VICE-PRESIDENT

Mel Otto  
7013 Dickinson Rd.  
Greenleaf, WI  
864-2449

#### SECRETARY

Kevin Wehner  
915 North 8<sup>th</sup> St.  
Manitowoc, WI 54220

#### TREASURER

Laura Braunel  
4526 Broadway St.  
Manitowoc, WI 54220  
684-1362

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#### Newsletter Editor

Bruce Morton  
3712 Michigan Ave.  
Manitowoc, WI 54220  
683-3078

[bjmorton@greenbaynet.com](mailto:bjmorton@greenbaynet.com)

Website  
[www.eaa383.org](http://www.eaa383.org)

EAA Chapter #383 meets regularly on the second Wednesday of each month in the Chapter clubhouse at Hangar #22 at the Manitowoc County Airport. Meetings begin at 7:30 p.m. and visitors are always welcome.

-----Minutes-----

**EAA CHAPTER 383 MEETING**

February 14, 2007

The Secretary was absent. No minutes were taken.

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(Continued from previous page)

I felt for the manual-activation D-ring on my chute harness, but with the suit inflated and my hands numbed by cold, I couldn't locate it. I decided I'd better open the faceplate, try to estimate my height above the ground, then locate that "D" ring. Just as I reached for the faceplate, I felt the reassuring sudden deceleration of main-chute deployment. I raised the frozen faceplate and discovered its uplatch was broken. Using one hand to hold that plate up, I saw I was descending through a clear, winter sky with unlimited visibility. I was greatly relieved to see Jim's parachute coming down about a quarter of a mile away.

My first-ever parachute landing was pretty smooth. I landed on fairly soft ground, managing to avoid rocks, cacti and antelopes. My chute was still billowing in the wind, though. I struggled to collapse it with one hand, holding the still-frozen faceplate up with the other. "Can I help you?" a voice said. Was I hearing things? I must be hallucinating. Then I looked up and saw a guy walking toward me, wearing a cowboy hat. A helicopter was idling a short distance behind him. If I had been at Edwards and told the search-and-rescue unit that I was going to bail out over the Rogers Dry Lake at a particular time of day, a crew couldn't have gotten to me as fast as that cowboy-pilot had. The gentleman was Albert Mitchell, Jr., owner of a huge cattle ranch in northeastern New Mexico. I had landed about 1.5 mi. from his ranch house and from a hangar for his two-place Hughes helicopter.

Amazed to see him, I replied I was having a little trouble with my chute. He walked over and collapsed the canopy, anchoring it with several rocks. After helping me with the chute, Mitchell said he'd check on Jim. He climbed into his helicopter, flew a short distance away and returned about 10 minutes later with devastating news: Jim was dead. Apparently, he had suffered a broken neck during the aircraft's disintegration and was killed instantly. Mitchell said his ranch foreman would soon arrive to watch over Jim's body until the authorities arrived. I asked to see Jim and, after verifying there was nothing more that

could be done, agreed to let Mitchell fly me to the Tucumcari hospital, about 60 mi. to the south.

Investigation of our accident revealed that the nose section of the aircraft had broken off aft of the rear cockpit and crashed about 10 mi from the main wreckage. Parts were scattered over an area approximately 15 miles long and 10 miles wide. Extremely high air loads and g-forces, both positive and negative, had literally ripped Jim and me from the airplane. Unbelievably good luck is the only explanation for my escaping relatively unscathed from that disintegrating aircraft.

Bill Weaver flight-tested all models of the Mach-2 F-104 Starfighter, and the entire family of Mach 3+ Blackbirds- the A-12, YF-12 and SR-71. He subsequently was assigned to Lockheed's L-1011 project as an engineering test pilot, and became the company's chief pilot. He later retired as Division Manager of Commercial Flying Operations.

## Manitowoc Educational Series to Host AOPA

Lakeshore Aviation will be the site of a continuing monthly educational series featuring experts on various aviation topics. A new topic will be featured on a Saturday morning each month, with the exception of AOPA on May 9<sup>th</sup>. Each session will last about 2 hours and will offer free donuts and coffee. Highlighting the season's agenda will be a presentation from AOPA's Air Safety Foundation. One of only three appearances in Wisconsin, an AOPA safety expert will be speaking on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2007. Pilots within a 60 mile radius of Manitowoc will receive invitations by mail. Mark your calendars now for this exciting event!

The complete schedule is being finalized, but the first 2 sessions will include:

April 14<sup>th</sup> State of Wisconsin Bureau of Aeronautics Aviation Safety Seminar

May 9<sup>th</sup> AOPA Air Safety Foundation "Say It Right" (note: Thursday evening)

## Dick Bronson back home

Dick was sprung from River's Bend last week and is now living back at home. It's still a matter of time to get the right side functioning properly again but I'm sure it feels good to be back home to recuperate.

Bruce Morton  
3712 Michigan Avenue  
Manitowoc, WI 54220



## FBO CORNER---

Every once in a while, you get a chance to do something exciting in life. Maybe not make history, exactly, but get a genuine thrill. Such was the case this past weekend when we were issued the Airworthiness Certificate for the first Savage Light Sport Aircraft we imported into the US from the Czech Republic. Manitowoc natives Keith and Julie Hartlaub, owners of the new Savage Aircraft Sales, entered into an agreement to be the exclusive US distributor of a 2-seat Light Sport plane, similar in design to the ever-popular Piper J-3 Cub. Lakeshore Aviation is heading up sales, assembly, certification and training for the operation.

Ever since the first plane came in, we've been anxious to fly it, but had to go through the proper FAA channels to get it licensed. Finally, this past Saturday, EAA's Joe Norris, who heads up the Light Sport Aircraft division of EAA, made his way to Manitowoc, approved everything, and sent the cute little red taildragger off into the skies over the US for the very first time. I was lucky enough to be on the inaugural flight with Julie, and Jim Wheeler, so excited he almost jumped into the plane, went next. We've got 5 flights on it so far. You, too, can rent this plane, with its humming 100HP Rotax engine and safety ballistic parachute. Stop in and see the new Savage, and have your own little "excitement" in life!

Lakeshore Aviation is also taking another step forward in developing services for business and personal travelers in northeastern Wisconsin. Non-stop flights, departing right out of Manitowoc, will eliminate all the TSA and security-related hassles, lost baggage and long lines and layovers. Passengers will be able to travel when and where they want to, not tied to airline schedules. Service is anticipated to begin mid-summer.

Plans are underway to provide on-demand Charter aircraft travel to any airport in the US or Canada. Such operations are known as Part 135 operations, relating to the section of the FAR's that govern them. Last week we just purchased our first Charter aircraft, a 6-seat 1979 Piper Seneca II. It's equipped with the newest Garmin 530 GPS color moving map technology, and is being upgraded for precision WAAS instrument approaches and terrain awareness. The Seneca features counter-rotating turbocharged Continental 200HP engines, is certified for Known-Ice operation and is certified to 25,000 feet. Cruise speed is a respectable 195 Kts. The plane is best suited for non-stop trips in the 500-750 mile range, but longer trips and other aircraft, including jets, can be arranged through other operators.

As spring approaches, the staff at Lakeshore Aviation would like to thank you for your continued support and business. We appreciate each and every customer, and welcome you to our FBO any time, even if just for a cup of coffee. And for those of you who didn't know, Erik is back, and thrilled to be here. Stop in and say HI. Welcome back, Erik!

Curt Drumm