

# PIREPS

A bi-monthly newsletter for Nebraska pilots and aviation enthusiasts



'Encourage and Facilitate the Development and Use of Aviation in Nebraska'

## PIREPS

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## Nebraska Aviation Symposium & Maintenance Seminar

Kearney, Nebraska was once again the site for the annual Aviation Symposium and Maintenance Seminar held January 25-28 at the Holiday Inn. The weather was superb with daytime highs in the 50's and not a flake of snow in sight.



Lisa Piccione, holding a copy of PIREPS, and Dr. Mike Larson

Opening remarks were made by Nebraska Aviation Council President, Dr. Michael Larson, NE Department of Aeronautics Director, Stuart MacTaggart, FAA Regional Manager Chris Blum and guest speaker Lisa Piccione from the National Business Aviation Association, Washington, DC. Also in attendance was Michelle

McEnany, Director of the Iowa Office of Aviation. Over 150 people attended the Thursday luncheon where guest speaker



George Marrett

George Marrett, test pilot for Howard Hughes, captivated the group with his stories about the legendary aviator. George, a former resident of Grand Island, had over ten of his former high school classmates attend the luncheon and evening banquet where he was inducted into the NE Aviation Hall of Fame.

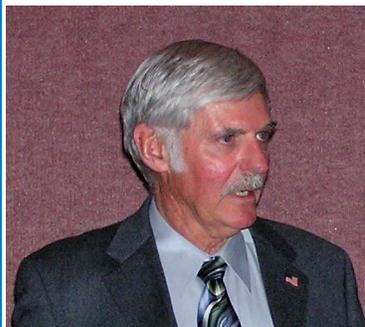
There were numerous concurrent sessions taking place during the day including the Designated Pilot Examiners forum, Sport Pilot/Light Sport Aircraft, Single Pilot IFR, NE Assoc. of Airport Officials meeting, Avionics and GPS demonstrations and a presentation by Beatrice native Brad Amstutz who developed and simulated the solo nonstop around the world flight of Steve Fossett in his Global Flyer. Brad is presently a flight instructor at Kansas State University, Salina, KS.



L to R: Stuart MacTaggart, George Hendon of the FAA, Michelle McEnany, and Chris Blum of the FAA



Brad Amstutz



Dick Rutan

The evening banquet was quite an affair! While everyone was dining on a delicious prime rib dinner, "The 1733 Barbershop Chorus" royally entertained us with their superb acapella renditions of choral music. The NE Airport of the Year was awarded to Scottsbluff's William B. Heilig Field and the NE Project of the Year awarded to Blair Municipal Airport. Three individuals were inducted into the NE Aviation Hall of Fame and you may read about those events further in this issue. Guest speaker for the evening was Dick Rutan, who flew around the world nonstop in a piston engine aircraft on December 14, 1986. This milestone flight took 9 days, 3 minutes and 44 seconds. The

Continued on Page 7



# Watch that first Step!

By Stuart MacTaggart

The aviation community seems to love slogans and acronyms --"severe clear", "bingo", "tally-ho", "fly safe". They seem to roll off the tongue, ever so casually. Not so fast! Did I say "Casually?!" "Fly safe" is more than just another term; it's an attitude. It blends preparation, knowledge, and proficiency, among other factors, to set the stage...

As pilots we can control many of the factors that blend to make flying safe—or unsafe. Perhaps it helps to consider the airplane as simply an inanimate object—a machine made of wire, metal, fluids and gases. It doesn't know if you are the Red Baron or "Hormel Hands;" it simply responds to your inputs. It also doesn't know if you got three hours sleep, had a fight with your girlfriend, or if you haven't flown hard IFR in a while. It doesn't care if you have 200 or 20,000 hours in the air.

These are things that you know. YOU control the decisions that go into the mix. Every flying safety officer will tell you that aircraft mishaps occur as a result of a series of events, and generally speaking, each event involves a decision on your part. Weather, proficiency, physical conditioning, equipment failures all play a role. The key for us is to recognize and break the chain early. When that voice says this isn't smart, listen. Know yourself well enough to recognize and watch out for that first step. And...Fly Safe!



**Stuart MacTaggart**  
Director, NE Dept of Aeronautics

# Life-long Dream Takes Flight

By Eric Freeman, Editor [www.positivehometownnews.com](http://www.positivehometownnews.com)

Randy Bonczynski fulfilled a life-long dream Sunday, Dec. 18, when he took to the sky over Columbus piloting his first solo flight in a 1978 Piper Warrior II airplane. What makes Bonczynski's story unique is that he's been wheelchair bound since an auto race crash made him a paraplegic in 1980.



**Randy Bonczynski**  
Photo By Tom Schwank

Bonczynski's love for speed and flight began with his first plane ride at age seven. "That first time I flew was one of those 'penny a pound' flights where the

pilot weighs you before you get in the plane," Bonczynski said. "That flight didn't cost me much, but it sure captured my imagination. I've always had an interest in flying and have been friends with several pilots. I'd hitch a ride on a plane any time I got the chance."

A chance meeting at the annual Fly-In breakfast at the Columbus Municipal Airport in August brought Bonczynski together with Tom Bernstein and Tom Schwank. The three Columbus residents were all interested in finding a way to own their own plane and after a few lunch time meetings their partnership in the airplane was agreed upon.

"The partnership has been awesome," said Tom Schwank. "This is a good way to go sharing expenses, three ways makes a lot of sense and makes this hobby affordable for all of us." The three men purchased the plane and flew it home from Iowa in September. Alterations to the plane's foot operated rudder controls were the necessary ingredient to making Bonczynski's dream come true. The alteration added hand controls to the rudders while leaving the original foot operated controls intact for Bernstein and Schwank. "The alteration conforms to the FAA regulations and doesn't change the way Tom's or my controls work," Schwank said. Schwank is a licensed pilot; both Bonczynski and Bernstein are still in the process of completing their pilot's training.

Bonczynski's solo flight was a milestone in his 40 hours of required training. "The day of my solo flight I completed five touch and goes and then let my instructor Larry Enquist out of the plane," Bonczynski said. "My first solo flight was exciting and terrifying at the same time." He said his family and friends have been supportive of him in his effort to get his pilot's license. He plans to complete his pilot's training by early summer 2006.

"The way I look at it, you get out of life what you put into it," Bonczynski said. "I think if you want something bad enough you just have to go for it."



## New Pilots and Certificates



Sasha Brandon – Omaha  
Jonathan Beha – Omaha  
Aaron Stubbendieck – Lincoln  
Jared Wall – Bellevue  
Joshua Tweedy – Omaha  
Paul Voorhees – Bellevue  
Gregory Burkholder – McCool Jcnctn  
Ty Benton – Grand Island  
Jeffrey Cizek – Omaha  
Chad Stewart – Ogallala  
Jared Rothfuss – Elkhorn  
Stephen Coufal – Omaha  
Joseph Remmenga – Elwood

### PRIVATE

Caleb Ramsey – Omaha  
Victoria Fowler – Papillion  
Michael Pribyl – Omaha  
Jeffrey Leuschen – Omaha  
Jorge Montoya – Omaha  
Barry Caughlin – Elkhorn  
Bradley Doell – Elsie  
Stephen Wildasin – Hastings  
Zane Malcom – Cozad  
Matthew Maude – Lincoln  
Donald Wurm – Beatrice  
Travis Ellis – Omaha

### MULTI-ENGINE

Rick Stanton – Lincoln  
Stephen Webb IV – Omaha  
Brandon Good – Omaha

### FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR

Wayne Fisher II – Lincoln (ME)  
Mason Rothwell – Hyannis (SE)

### INSTRUMENT

David Hughes – Omaha  
Jason Linder – Lincoln  
Joel Young – Theford

### COMMERCIAL

Arthur McArthur – Lincoln  
Juan Zuluaga – Omaha  
Thomas Pflug – Omaha  
Stephen Webb IV – Omaha  
Brandon Good – Omaha  
Jerome Howard – Omaha  
Jason Lammers – Hartington

### ATP

Ernest Desmone – Plattsmouth (SE)



# Practice Makes Perfect



Thomas Gribble

By Thomas Gribble

**Editor's Note: In the last issue Tom was in the midst of a complete engine failure of his Aeronca somewhere between the Wildcat Hills and Scott's Bluff National Monument. The "saga" continues . . . . . !**

At 700' AGL, the first item on the engine failure check-list is to look for a suitable landing site. To my right the ground appears to be quite rough. Ahead, within

gliding distance, at least, the land seems to be a series of small undulating hillocks. But there, to my left and very close, is the only place which looks the least bit inviting. A north-south fence paralleling the field stands between us. An east-west fence delineates its southern boundary.

Now I go through the rest of the drill. I check the magneto switches "On". I pull the carb heat "On". No change. I push it "Off". I check the throttle full open. I move the mixture to full rich, then back to where I had it, with no change. Although my Aeronca has two fuel tanks, only the cowl tank feeds the engine, and it's been running nearly thirty minutes. But still, I check the fuel valve "On".

The wing tank, when turned "On", merely adds fuel to the cowl tank. If the wing tank is turned "On" too soon, the cowl tank will overflow. Prior to this flight I had flown nine tenths of an hour after filling both tanks. About five minutes ago, when the thirteen gallon cowl tank read half full, I had opened the five and a half gallon wing tank to replenish the cowl tank. I now note the cowl tank reads three-quarters full and the wing tank says it is down to one-quarter. About right at 5.25 GPH. And, I have just now put more than four gallons into the cowl tank from the wing tank. I can not be out of gas. I turn the wing tank "Off".

I turn my attention back to flying. In my mind it seems five minutes have elapsed since it got so very quiet. A glance at the altimeter and airspeed puts the lie to this. We're level at about 700' AGL, and I've milked off a mere 10 MPH in indicated air speed. It can not have been more than a few seconds.

I hold my altitude until the airspeed settles on 65 MPH and then let the glide begin. After passing over the east-west fence I roll into a 30° banked, 180° turn to final, still holding onto 65 MPH. I'll be a little high over the fence, but I can always slip to a landing.

I roll out on short final and slow to 60 MPH. I now see the first 200 yards or so of the field runs slightly uphill and contains about four or five hummocks, small east-west mounds, maybe three feet high and six foot wide. Grateful now for the extra altitude, I glide beyond this area.

**Continued on Page 8, Right Column**

# Check Airman's Corner

By Lee Svoboda

Well I did return back to the GOOD LIFE in Nebraska in December. Even though I had the best intentions and a great load that I had tested in Arizona, I did not get that new muzzleloader out into the field and harvest Bambi's grandfather. But I have been enjoying the mild winter weather with



Lee Svoboda

you and I have not had to worry about all those cold weather cautions discussed in the last article. **HOWEVER:**

**SYSTEMS, SYSTEMS, SYSTEMS.** For some reason, system knowledge has suddenly been lacking in most of the practical tests that I have been administering. And the trend has been across the whole spectrum of tests, from the private right on through multiengine and Airline Transport ratings.

For a private pilot rating, the aircraft used is normally a single engine, fixed pitch prop and fixed gear. The engine: what is the horsepower and at what RPM? It most likely has a carburetor but it could be fuel injected. If it has a carburetor, how does the carburetor heat-system work and how does the primer system work? If it is fuel injected, how is it primed, and how does the alternate air system work? The fuel system: total fuel and how much is usable? Can the system be run on both tanks, or must it be switched from one to the other during flight? Normally there is an electrical system: is it an alternator or a generator, what is the capacity? Where is the battery located and what is the capacity? Does the aircraft meet all the lighting requirements to operate at night? Does the aircraft have a vacuum system, a pump or a venturi tube? What instruments are operated by the vacuum system, can the aircraft be used for day VFR flying with the vacuum system inoperative? These aircraft normally have a hydraulic system, i.e., brakes and hydraulic devices, i.e., struts and probably a shimmy dampener. Is there a cabin heater, how does it work? How do all the flight instruments work? What engine condition instruments must work and are there any relationships?

The above is a pretty extensive list, but now looking at a light twin, the list of systems further expands. i.e., retractable gear, constant speed props, anti and deice systems, pressurization, demanding fuel systems with cross feeding, elaborate electrical systems and more.

Now I have found applicants that take the attitude, "as long as they work, I don't care how they work". And in that attitude is the essence of why you must know how the systems work, because there will come a time when they will not work. And when that time comes, knowing how the system works could extend your life.



# NE Aviation Hall of Fame Inducts Three

Three new members were inducted into the NE Aviation Hall of Fame during the January NE Aviation Symposium and Maintenance Seminar held at Kearney. They were Jens Tinus Christensen, Ralph Holtman and George Marrett. This article outlines their significant aviation accomplishments with individual photos and was donated to this issue of PIREPS by Sandi Decker, Chairwoman of the NE Aviation Hall of Fame. If you would like to make a tax deductible donation to this worthy organization contact Sandi at 402-729-2250 or email: [sandid@alltel.net](mailto:sandid@alltel.net)

## Jens Tinus Christensen



Jens Tinus Christensen was born in Denmark on August 25, 1890 but came to Nebraska at the age of four when his parents immigrated to America. They settled in Blair and that is where Christensen went to school. He graduated from

Dana College.

Christensen joined the military in 1917, took flight training and served as a flight instructor during World War I, mustering out in 1919. He continued flying, performing at exhibitions in cities around the Midwest. He hired on with the aviation mail service in 1920 and was one of the first to fly the Omaha-Chicago route, which was based at a field on the Ak-Sar-Ben grounds.

Flying the mail in 1920 was very dangerous as pilots had no radio contact and no instruments for flying in bad weather. Thirty-one of the first forty pilots hired by the post office died in the line of duty.

Christensen was considered one of the best airmail pilots. As an experienced stunt flyer, he had a good sense of the winds aloft and set speed records for the Omaha-Chicago and Chicago-New York airmail runs. Christensen helped to found the Associated Airmail Pilots union, serving as one of its first presidents.

Christensen was transferred to Chicago in 1921 and made his first flight on the Chicago-Cleveland route on a foggy April morning. On his approach to Cleveland, he got lost in the fog and had to fly low over the city in search of landmarks. The engine on his DeHaviland biplane sputtered and failed. Christensen aimed for the river to avoid pedestrians on the streets but crash landed and burst into flames on the railroad tracks beside the Cuyahoga River.

The funeral in Blair, gave an indication of his popularity and accomplishments as a flyer. More than 1,000 cars ( a huge number in 1921) arrived at the burial site and an estimated 10,000 people attended the services and watched as planes from the Omaha Airmail Division flew over and dropped garlands of flowers. His grave was marked with a giant propeller and in 1941 a local airfield

was named for him.

Tinus Christensen brought credit to Nebraska through his service as a pioneer aviator. His accomplishments were groundbreaking and his skills landed him in the record books, inspiring others through his energy, positive attitude and love of flying.

Accepting for Jens Tinus Christensen was his great nephew, Oscar Tinus Christensen.

## Ralph Holtmann

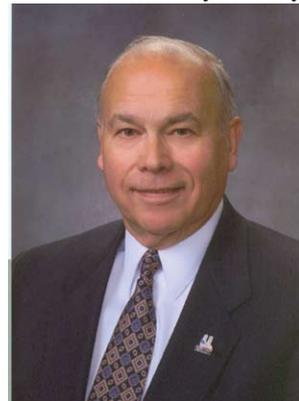
Ralph B. Holtmann was born in Brooklyn, New York on March 6, 1936. He attended school there and later traveled by subway to the Bronx to attend Manhattan College, where he graduated with a bachelor degree in civil engineering. He then received a commission as Second Lieutenant in the USAF.

In March of 1959, Holtmann entered active duty and was assigned to Wright Patterson AFB, Ohio. In 1962, he was selected for an Air Force sponsored program specializing in construction of buildings and facilities in space and on the moon.

The next several years were spent working with several construction squadrons in the States and a stint in Viet Nam. After Viet Nam, Holtmann was assigned to the 14th Aerospace Force in Colorado Springs where he worked with facilities throughout the world that were tasked with tracking man-made objects in space.

In 1973, Holtmann was assigned to the Headquarters of the Strategic Air Command at Offutt AFB, where he held several positions eventually being assigned to the Office of the Inspector General. Here he was charged with inspections of SAC bases for civil engineering organizations. In November 1979, Holtmann became the Base Civil Engineer at Offutt and was responsible for all facilities, including the runway, hangars, taxiways and buildings. He was responsible for the base master plan, which included converting historic base buildings for future use. These buildings were steeped in tradition and required a sensitive but practical approach. Holtmann was responsible for the planning, programming and development of one of the largest construction projects, a maintenance facility to simultaneously house five specially-modified RC-135 aircraft. Upon retiring from the Air Force in 1983, he was awarded the Legion of Merit for his efforts. In addition to the Legion of Merit, Holtmann received two Bronze Stars, four Meritorious Service Medals, Air Force Commendation Medal, Outstanding Unit Award with Valor and numerous service and campaign medals and ribbons during his career.

Holtmann then went to work for the Nebraska Department of Aeronautics as a Senior Engineer. He provided advice on planning projects and assistance during the construction of runways,



**NE Aviation of Fame***Continued From Page 4*

taxiways, aprons and other facilities. He was the liaison between airport sponsors, their consultants and the Federal Aviation Administration.

In 1989, Holtmann became Director of Planning and Engineering for the Omaha Airport Authority. Eppley Airfield had one Category Two ILS and two Category One ILS systems when he started work there. Eppley now has two Category Three ILS approaches and will soon have four Category One ILS approaches. Two of these were installed by the Airport Authority but transferred to the FAA for operation and maintenance because of Holtmann's ability to ensure their development.

Approximately \$110 million of federal grants for development were acquired under Holtmann's leadership. This included a state of the art communications center with access control and closed circuit television for the entire airport, expanded cargo aprons and facilities, a maintenance complex, numerous terminal projects, runway extension and a new runway with precision instrument approaches. The initial 7000 feet of construction for the new runway was scheduled as a three year project, but due to Ralph's communications with the FAA, the contractors and engineers, the project was completed in just two years and within the original budget. The Board of Directors entered a resolution in the records of the Omaha Airport Authority to commend Ralph's efforts.

Upon retirement, Holtmann accepted a part time position with Lamp, Rynearson & Associates, Inc, where he continues to provide expertise for their airport team. Ralph and his wife, Pat, have raised four children and seven grandchildren and reside in Bellevue.

## George J. Marrett

George J. Marrett was born in Grand Island, Nebraska in 1935 and graduated from Iowa State College in 1957 with a BS in chemistry. Shortly thereafter, he entered the United States Air



Force as a Second Lieutenant from the Reserve Officers Training Corps. He graduated from pilot training in 1959 at Webb, AFB in Texas, where he flew the Lockheed T-33 Shooting Star. He went to advanced flight training at Moody AFB in Georgia where he flew the North American F-86L, SabreJet. After four years in the 84th Fighter Interceptor Squadron at Hamilton AFB,

California, flying the McDonnell F-101B Voodoo, he was selected to attend the USAF test pilot school in 1964. There he flew the Northrop T-38 Talon, Lockheed F-104 Starfighter and General Dynamics F-106 Delta Dart. After graduation, he transferred to the fighter test branch at Edwards AFB, where he flew the McDonnell F-4C Phantom, Northrop F-5A Freedom Fighter and General Dynamics F-111A Aardvark.

During the Vietnam conflict, Marrett flew the Douglas A-1 Skyraider as a "Sandy" rescue pilot in Thailand. He completed 188 combat missions with over 600 combat hours and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross with two Oak Leaf Clusters and the Air Medal with eight Oak Leaf Clusters. Later, he published a non-fiction book about flying combat in Southeast Asia, titled "Cheating Death: Combat Air Rescues in Vietnam and Laos".

Upon returning from the war, Marrett joined Hughes Aircraft Company as an experimental test pilot. For twenty years he flew test programs which helped develop attack radar and missiles in F-15, F-16 and F-18 fighters and an early version of the B-2 Stealth bomber. He has flown over 40 types of military aircraft and logged over 8,500 hours.

Marrett is the author of three Air Force flight test reports and fourteen stories for aviation magazines, including Wings, Tailhook, Flight Journal, Air & Space and Aerospace Testing International, a British magazine.

His second book, "Howard Hughes: Aviator", was published in October 2004. Marrett appeared on the History Channel programs, "Boy's Toys and Modern Miracles" about Howard Hughes. He was also in "Man, Moment & Machines" talking about the Spruce Goose. Marrett was in both versions of the "Making of the Aviator", that aired on several channels. He was a talking head on the DVD of the movie, "The Aviator". His third book, about his twenty years with Hughes Aircraft Company is called "Howard Hughes' Test Pilot".

Marrett retired from Hughes in 1989 and lives in Atascadero, Ca. He is founder of the Estrella Warbird Museum at the Paso Robles airport where he flies his 1945 Stinson L-5E Sentinel and 1946 Aeronca L-16 Champ. He is the chief pilot for DP Industries flying their King Air C-90 and is on the Board of Trustees of the National Test Pilot School in Mojave, CA.

## Deadline for Configuration B Runway Marking

Runway threshold markings (or stripes) are required unless the runway is visual. In 1993, FAA changed the design for runway threshold markings. Configuration A (old standard) had 8 stripes no matter what the runway width, with the stripes getting thinner as the runway width decreased. Configuration B (new standard) has anywhere from 4 to 16 stripes depending on runway width with the stripes the same width (5.75') for all runways.

Airports are advised to check their markings and verify that they have Configuration B. The deadline for changing to Configuration B is January 1, 2008.

If your airport has the old configuration, the NDA can assist with marking the new configuration through our Pavement Marking Program. However, the airport will need to arrange for the old configuration to be removed. If you have questions, please contact Russ Gasper at 402-471-7700.



# William B. Heilig Field NE Airport of the Year

Five judges representing the Experimental Aircraft Association, NE Flying Farmers, NE Ninety-Nines, NE Aviation Trades Association and General Aviation Operators deliberated for nearly ten days concerning the nominations for NE Airport of the Year. When the votes were in and the scores tabulated, Western Nebraska Regional Airport (WNRA), William B. Heilig Field at Scottsbluff was the clear winner.



L to R: Bob Unzicker (Vice Chairman Scotts Bluff County Airport Authority), Darwin Skelton (Airport Mgr), and Stuart MacTaggart

State Senator Adrian M. Smith stated it very succinctly when he said "Air service is vital to any community . . . Western Nebraska Regional Airport has stepped up to the challenge and on October 29 the new \$4.2 million dollar terminal was officially opened". "The management of the airport has accommodated the needs of the local community and the traveling public."

Another State Senator, Philip Erdman, wrote, "The Western Nebraska Regional Airport has distinguished itself as an organization dedicated to excellence in all aspects of its business, customer service, and community outreach". "WNRA also continues to distinguish itself in its industry when it was named one of the top three airports in the state in boarding".

Dave Boechner, Mayor of Scottsbluff, said "As a gateway to the community, leadership points to the new terminal as an example of the progressive, community building spirit our citizens expect. . . As a result of these improvements, private enterprise, now more than ever, understands the long term commitment to the facility. . . The private sector has renewed confidence in the opportunities now available."

Mark Masterton, Chairman of the Board of the Scotts Bluff County Commissioners commented "The new Donald E. Overman Terminal was completed in October 2005. . . and remodeling of the old terminal into an Office Complex was started in November of 2005. A project including paving of the apron, runway and taxiway lighting and signage, and lighted wind cones will be completed in 2006. In addition, a second Instrument Landing System (ILS), only the third airport in the state with two, including Medium

Intensity Approach Lighting System (MALSR), Glide Slope (GS), and a Localizer facility with Distance Measuring Equipment (LOC/DME) on the 12 approach is currently being completed. . . WNRA continues to improve services for the Panhandle of Nebraska. . ."

In a letter from Karen Anderson, Executive Director of the Scottsbluff/Gering United Chamber of Commerce, she commented that "Scottsbluff/Gering is a regional hub that offers retail, professional services, and health care for western Nebraska and eastern Wyoming. A regional airport is a vital part of our community."

Congratulations to Airport Authority Chairman Donald E. Overman, Authority members and Airport Manager Darwin Skelton and his team. Western Nebraska Regional Airport, William B. Heilig Field was the 2005 Nebraska Airport of the Year!

# Blair Airport, Project Of The Year 2005

By Russ Gasper

The Department of Aeronautics (NDA) gives state grants and loans for airport construction and planning and serves as agent for airports receiving federal grants. A record year for federal projects in NE was 2005. There were 55 federal grants issued for 43 projects at general aviation airports. NDA staff responsible for record year efforts were: Russ Gasper, Anna Lannin, Barry Scheinost, Bob Richter, Justin Strasburg and Barb Atkins.

Many of the 2005 projects were worthy of the award; however, the project that really stood out as the best project was the one that had no major disruption to airport activities, was completed on-time, under budget, and was good quality work - in other words a good smooth project. With this criteria, no individual is acting completely alone. It is a team effort by the Airport Sponsor, Consultant and Contractor.

This year's winner was a project that had no disruptions in



Blair Airport Sign as Seen From Hwy 31



L to R: Rod Storm (BAA), Loren Havekost (BAA), Gary Forristall (CVC), Dave Johnson (BAA), Arn Hottovy (HWS), Don McElravy (HWS), Jeremy Olson (HWS), Garold Ulmer (HWS), Andrew Beil (HWS), Russ Gasper (NDA)



aircraft operations. It should be noted that this project required four construction phases that allowed the airport to remain open during runway construction. It had no major change orders, was anticipated to come under budget and based on profilograph testing had the smoothest pavement on a general aviation runway in at least the last 5 years. The average profilograph index for the



runway was 0.4 in/mile and this was achieved without milling.

The consultant produced excellent plans and specifications and additionally communicated effectively with the Airport, NDA and FAA as to the project status, changes (no matter how minor) and construction phases. In general, this project was completed as planned and with no surprises after the project was completed.

The contractor had an excellent understanding of the project, which was apparent during the preconstruction meeting with the submittal of a very detailed construction schedule. In addition, the contractor's construction techniques/equipment played a significant role in the outstanding quality of work. For example, all paving equipment was top notch and in excellent working condition. It should be noted that the contractor paved the 4200-ft. X 100-ft. runway in four working days (VERY IMPRESSIVE!!).

The Airport Sponsor, NDA and FAA were very pleased with this project and the performance of the contractor and consultant. This project illustrated timely responsiveness and excellence by the Blair Airport Authority (BAA), HWS Consulting Group (HWS) and the contractor, Cedar Valley Corporation (CVC).

This winner of "Project of the Year" award was Airport Paving for the Blair Municipal Airport, Blair, Nebraska.

**"NE Aviation Symposium & Maint. Seminar" Continued**

Voyager was designed by Dick's brother, Burt Rutan, who is a world-renowned airplane designer. It took five years to build and test the aircraft in Mojave, California, before taking off on its remarkable record-setting flight from Edwards Air Force Base with Dick and copilot Jeanne Yeager. Four days after landing, President Ronald Reagan presented the Voyager crew and its designer with the Presidential Citizenship Medal.

**The Maintenance Seminar**

Bright and early on Friday morning, coffee and sweet rolls were available at 7:30 am. Promptly at 8am, the required 8 hours of training for Inspector Authorization Renewal began with a presentation by Larry Becherer of the Lincoln FSDO. Larry highlighted some very interesting items about the aircraft Airworthiness Certificate that mechanics and pilots should know.

Another presentation concerning aircraft batteries held my attention. It was all about "recombinant" batteries which do use lead plates and have a full 30 month replacement warranty. That warranty can be renewed by replacing the internal block of the battery for an additional 30 months of warranty and at 75% of the cost of a new battery. There were additional presentations on float carburetors, fuel injection systems, corrosion control/composite repair and aircraft propeller maintenance.

After a full day of listening to very informative presentations it was time for the evening banquet, awards and another extremely



**For Elliott Aviation, L to R: Joel Hieserman, Adam Shelburg, Tim Schrum, Bob Hansen, Jeff Davis and FAA Larry Becherer**

interesting evening with speaker Dick Rutan. Three awards were given for the Avionics Maintenance Technician "Certificates of Excellence". Elliott Aviation, Inc., Union Pacific's Aviation Department, and ConAgra Foods, Inc. Flight Department were all presented with the Diamond Award for excellence in their



**For Union Pacific--Rick Koyner**

**For ConAgra -- Stan Denman**

maintenance departments.

Over 160 maintenance personnel attended the evening banquet

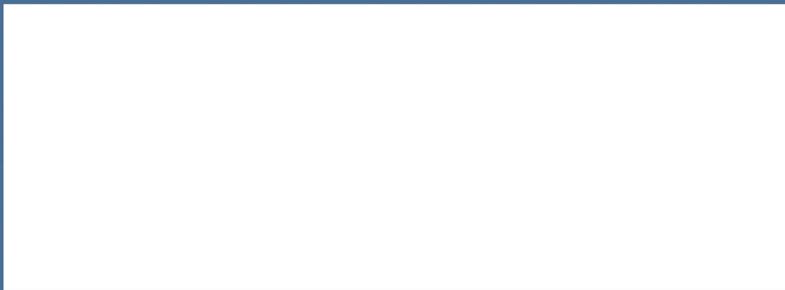
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## Calendar of Events

- York Airport (JYR), EAA Chapter 1055 Fly-in breakfast on the 1st Saturday of every month. 0800-1000. Free to PIC.
- Crete Airport (CEK), EAA Chapter 569 Fly-in breakfast on the 3rd Saturday of every month. 0730-1030.

## NE Aviation Trades Assoc. Annual Convention & Agricultural Aviation Exposition

- **Feb. 13-15** Grand Island (GRI) Don't miss this event if you're an aerial applicator, maintenance person, exhibitor or just interested in flying low over farmlands and earning a living while benefiting the agricultural production of this great country of ours.

Convention registration fee is \$75 for NATA members, others as applicable. For PAASS recertification you must attend on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Once again it is being held at the Midtown Holiday Inn, Grand Island, Feb. 13-15. For room reservations call 1-800-548-5542. For Convention registration obtain a registration form from NATA, 192 W. Lakeshore Dr, Lincoln, NE 68528 or email: nata@alltel.net

**April 15** - Lincoln International Aviation Art Contest Awards ceremony, Lincoln Air National Guard Conference room. Three age categories, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners will be recognized.

**May 19-21** Ord (ODX) Evelyn Sharp Day Sunday, May 21st. Part of ExtraORDinary Days which are May 19-21. More info: Heloise Bresley 308-728-3000 or Ord Chamber of Commerce 308-728-7875.

### *"Practice Makes Perfect"*

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Then it's full in on the right rudder and hard over left stick with a touch more back pressure. About ten feet above the grass I kick it straight and flare to a gentle three-point landing.

The roll-out is smoother than I had expected on this uncultivated, native grass pasture. I stay off the brakes and hold full up elevator, hoping to avoid a nose-over should I hit soft ground or a gopher or badger hole. My biggest concern now is abandoned farm machinery - hidden in the tall grass. As the speed decreases, the propeller lazily comes to rest with a blade at the 1 o'clock position. This is bad news for a starterless airplane.

The Airknocker slows leisurely to a stop about 1,600 feet north of the fence (later measured at 0.3 miles on my pickup's odometer), with no damage to her airframe and no injuries to her pilot. In my mind the time from completion of the emergency memory items to the moment movement ceased was not more than five seconds. But, at the airspeeds flown, I know it takes substantially longer than a minute to lose 700 feet.

The approach and landing - the actual flying of the airplane - was done instinctively, without consciously thinking about what I was doing. This is instinct borne of regular, repetitive, routine practice and not some marvelous gift of nature. No human is a "natural" pilot. Flying high in the sky, like diving deep in the sea, is totally foreign to our species. We must work diligently both at learning and retaining the skills required of our art.

I turn the magnetos off, pull the throttle to idle, place the mixture in idle cut-off. I look at my watch. It is 8:51 A.M. on this beautiful, June 27, 2005, Monday morning.