

THUNDERBIRD AVIATION

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The Official Newsletter of the
Hiperlight

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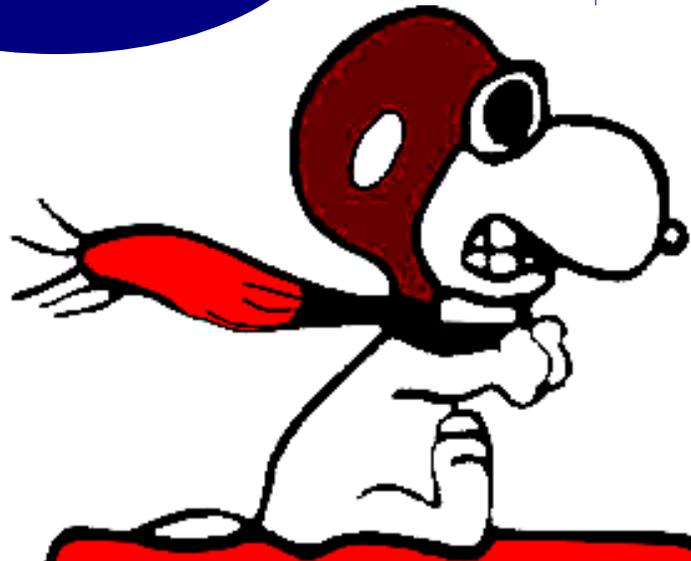
HAPPY NEW YEAR

(A little late, we know)

I'm not sure where the time went, but it seems like only yesterday I was writing the January newsletter for 2011.

We are only a few weeks into the new year, but it is shaping up to be a busy year. We still have several projects in the works, and more than I can count that are still on the back burner. The SLSA version of the Hiperlight is still on the front burner, and we are busy ramping up for Oshkosh this coming summer. As of this writing, Sun 'N Fun is still a toss up. It's going to come down to a matter of time management. We finished our first Hiperlight project with the middle school a couple of weeks ago, and are working toward a second one to start this coming spring.

Let's make 2012 a safe and happy year for aviation!



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HIPERLIGHT HAPPENINGS: MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

The last several issues, we've mentioned our project involving a group a 7th and 8th graders building a Hiperlight. It officially got underway October 5th of last year, and I'm proud to announce that on January 4th the group put the finishing touches on a project that was first discussed over 6 years ago.

The last day of class was interesting. We had several parents, some of the staff from the school, and the principle, Mr. Behrman on hand. Lots of pictures, questions, comments, and even some speculation on the part of

Mr. Mooney, the assistant principle, on how the airplane might look suspended from the ceiling in the school lobby.

All in all, it was pretty exciting for everyone, but most importantly, for the kids. It was quite a learning experience for everyone involved.

As of this writing, we are tentatively planning on building another Hiperlight in March.

But right now, I would like to introduce the Hiperlight Class of 2012. Even some of the staff got into the act. One of the photos shows Mr. Norris. He

stopped by almost every class to check out the progress, and eventually his curiosity got the best of him, and he had to try the plane on for size. Judging by the thumbs up, it must have been a good fit.

The chubby kid with the 5 o'clock shadow is actually Mr. Paul Jakey, shop teacher, technology instructor, and retired aircraft mechanic, without his help this project would not have been possible.

Hiperlight Class of 2012



Evan Tomlie

Katie Hirzel

Ryan Coopman

Maddie Burgin



Nick Schram

Arman
Zedah



Joel Bush

Justin Ripka



Joe Schram

Zak Pierre



Mr. Norris

Mr. Jakey

WHAT'S NEW

Roughly a year and a half ago, I was contacted by a gentleman in South Africa. Dr. Andre Verster, who along with his wife Elaine, own the only Hiperlight known to exist on the African continent. What sets Andre apart from the average aviator is that he is a teacher by profession. This past fall Andre and Elaine opened an aviation based high school in South Africa. I can only imagine the months or years of planning and preparation, along with the thousands of hours that go into a venture like this. I've been in touch with Andre on a fairly regular basis, and I can honestly say that he is

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one of only a few people I know that truly "thinks outside the box". He's extended an invitation for me to visit him in South Africa, and the only hold up is just a matter of blocking the time. (Actually, I'm afraid I'll get over there and find out I like it.) The fact that it never snows there really grabbed my attention.

We're trying to get some type of correspondence set up between his group and mine. It will be interesting to compare two similar groups, 12,000 miles apart.

We will be keeping our readers up to speed on how Andre and Elaine are doing.



HELPFUL HINTS

A while back I had a Hiperlight driver ask what he could do about a slight amount of drag in his flaperon hinges.

He asked if WD-40 would be ok. Ordinarily that's not a problem. However, any machinist will tell you that WD-

40, when used on aluminum (such as the flaperon spar) it works great for removing material. Something with a silicon base is recommended.

Here's a suggestion from this issue's feature pilot, Dean Pallas. There's no such thing as being "too visible" when you're in the air. Dean hit upon the idea of using small battery powered strobes, commonly used by bicyclists, and installed 3 of them on his Hiperlight. They are relatively inexpensive, less than \$10 each, and reportedly have a battery life of 150 hours.

We welcome any tips, hints, or suggestions that anyone would like to send our way.

RON'S RAMBLINGS

Well, our 1st middle school Hiperlight project is now in the books. It took a lot of time and effort, but was well worth it. It wouldn't surprise me to see one or two pilots emerge from this group. As this issue goes to press, the aircraft has been dismantled and brought back to the shop to be refurbished as needed and prepped for the next group.

With the first project complete, it's time to resume work on a lot of projects that have been put on the back burner, one of which is working toward SLSA certification for the 2 place Hiperlight, and getting a couple of airplanes ready for Oshkosh this summer. This year marks the 30th anniversary for the Hiperlight.



CARA'S CORNER

Truthfully, I didn't help much when it came to the middle school Hiperlight project. But, I was exponentially helpful in taking pictures. I didn't take all of the pictures, but in my humble opinion, mine are the best.

I talked with the students about what they thought about this project and I got all types of answers, beginning with: they loved it. They loved building this airplane. One boy asked, "How many chances do you get to build an airplane?" and he's right. So far, my airplane building count is zero, and this middle schooler is one up on me. Now, I don't really know that much about building things, so it doesn't bother me too much. But if I did like to build stuff, I'm sure it would bother me more.

All in all, these students loved this project, and had a ball every step of the way. Take a look at all the pictures littered through the newsletter, they speak for themselves



FEATURED PILOT DEAN PALLAS



This issue is featuring a relative new comer to the Hiperlight family. His name is Dean Pallas, and calls St. Augustine, FL his home. I first heard from Dean this past October, and was fasinated with his story and how he became involved with the Hiperlight. Here is Dean's story in his own words.

This Hiperlight I purchased in August from gentlemen in Hawthorn Florida. He had been flying it weekly and the opportunity came up where I could buy it.

My story starts when I was a boy building model airplanes and for reasons I can't explain I was always fascinated with biplanes. I just liked them. The Hiperlight is the only enclosed biplane in the ultra light industry that I know of. So this was my choice, and anybody who sees this plane loves it. I was so proud of it I couldn't sleep and the day after it was delivered I could hardly be-

lieve it was mine. Would you believe I actually had buyer remorse! That changed when the seller told me he had seller's remorse.

Now I actually had my first real plane. Wow! I started to do some taxiing. Hasting Florida is a small town mostly farm land, potatoes and sod. This is one of the best places to learn to fly. So off I went, 2300 feet of runway 100 feet wide and all to myself with no traffic and a grass field. It doesn't get any better and I had a Hiperlight! Yes a real Hiperlight.

My taxing was horrible; I took up the whole airport trying to taxi. Now this is a good time to tell you about my background. I went to trade school to be an A&P. After school I worked for Pratt & Whitney engines in East Hartford, then to Hamilton Standard Propeller, Boeing, PTC aerospace, but never as a pilot. I was involved with Quality Assurance but didn't fly. My

dad had a small plane for 15 years and so I could fly with him. I built Model airplanes prior to that. I never did a takeoff or a landing by myself dad was always there and had his feet on the pedals. So now here I am in a tail dragger biplane of my dreams all alone and no clue how to taxi. The Hiperlight has a wide gear and balloon tires very forgiving. I taxied the month of September for the most part. I just could not get the hang of it. So I decided to get some training. I found one instructor in town of St Augustine but he wanted me to train for my Sport pilot license and it would cost just a little less than a private license. Then off to another place locally but they did not have a tail dragger. This was discouraging, and as it turned out there were two very experienced pilots and two certified instructors right at the little airport I was practicing at. They must have been watching me, not mention God was too. They started to mentor me and they liked the biplane. I explained one problem I kept having. I would apply power and start my roll down the grass runway and all was perfect. The airplane felt very stable and solid. Now here is my problem, as I was nearing the end of the runway I would pull back on my power and I felt completely out of control. All I could think of was that this would not work if landing. They saw my problem and talking one Friday evening we realized what I was feeling. As you apply power and start your roll, you will add some rudder to compensate for torque and prop wash, this is normal. Now when you pull back power you will steer yourself right off the runway if you don't back off the rudder. I knew exactly what they were talking about as I had heard it and saw it in my models. The next day was Saturday and I was up early taxing and sure enough when I let off the rudder

and pulled back the power all was perfect. I also added my power and reduced power gently and as smooth as possible and it worked. Now I would add a little more power and I pushed the stick forward with just a slight amount of pressure, and suddenly the tail came up!! Wow, I was really excited and now I could see in front of me. Just ease back on the power, back off the rudder and she would settle right on down. I was so excited by the end of my practice I was taking six foot strides. It was all I could do to concentrate in church the next day. Thankfully we serve a great God, and he has so much patience with us. Monday I was up and out to the airport early. I decided it would be a good time to go through all the hoops as if I would take off. I was not planning to take off just do some high speed taxing. I did my pre-flight; gas was half tank, with good gas, 89 ethanol free with Pennzoil 2 cycle air-cooled oil. I latched the canopy; put the seat belt and shoulder harness on. I started down the runway on my taxi. Everything felt perfect with little effort. The Hiperlight was so easy to steer just don't forget your got 22 feet of wing, I was not fighting it she was smooth. I headed into the wind and started down the runway, the tail came up very predictable and I was going maybe half throttle at 40 mph. I put a slight amount of pressure on the stick but this time the pressure was back. Silence and smoothness and no rumbling of the tires??

I was airborne and it was soooo cool, I was not worried or anxious, just thrilled and it felt like somebody's hand was under me. In less than a few seconds I was 300 feet in the air! What an experience. This plane just wanted to fly. She was so happy in the air. Suddenly I was eyeball to eyeball with a huge Hawk. Now there some tense moments because I did not want to hit him. I rolled to the left and as suddenly as he appeared he was gone. I found out later birds will dive if they feel threatened. So now I am looking around and can't find the airport, everything looks so different. That was A problem because I knew I had to land sometime. As it turned out I was right over it and didn't recognize it because it had shrunk. All I thought was it is not big enough, but 300 feet makes a difference. I was not worried now, so I flew around for about 15 minutes and I remembered one of my pilot friends saying if you get in the air make a few passes as low as you can before you try to land. I did that and it worked perfect. So now I set up to land. I focused on a point on the runway I wanted to touch down on and headed for it. Gently pulling back on the power and she settled into a nice glide. I got down to about 5 feet and started to feel her settling nicely and with those flavorings and slow speed I settled right on in, like falling into a bean bag chair. I think she may have bounce once

and I was rolling to a stop. That was my first flight and so-loed. Now I am flying as much as I can every morning. Flying has bitten me, I have had race cars, boats, antiques, big trucks, but nothing could compare to this.

The Hiperlight is such a forgiving plane with its wide gear, balloon tires and slow landing speed even an untrained pilot with a little help and coaching can fly safely. Would I sell her? NO this is a lasting memory for me and this little plane has treated me good, I would recommend it to anybody who has the desire to fly. Just go up and look around and see for yourself. No stop signs, speed limits or radar traps, nobody in your way (occasionally a hawk) and lots of good clean fun. It will not break your bank account. It will take a little planning to get started but little in the way of cost to get started. I can't say now, because after you may find things you need or like navigation aides, GPS and weather info. All in all, Ron Jones and the folks at Tbird aviation will be great support and encouragement. They can even build you a plane, imagine that! Hiperlights are in demand and worth the price. Do your homework check them out. Keep them flying.



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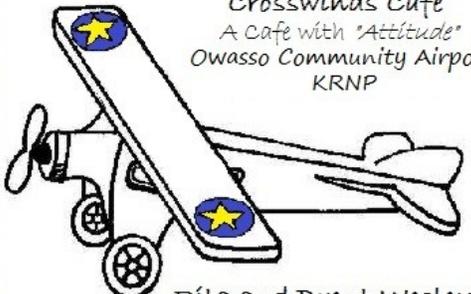
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