

# THUNDERBIRD AVIATION

September 2013

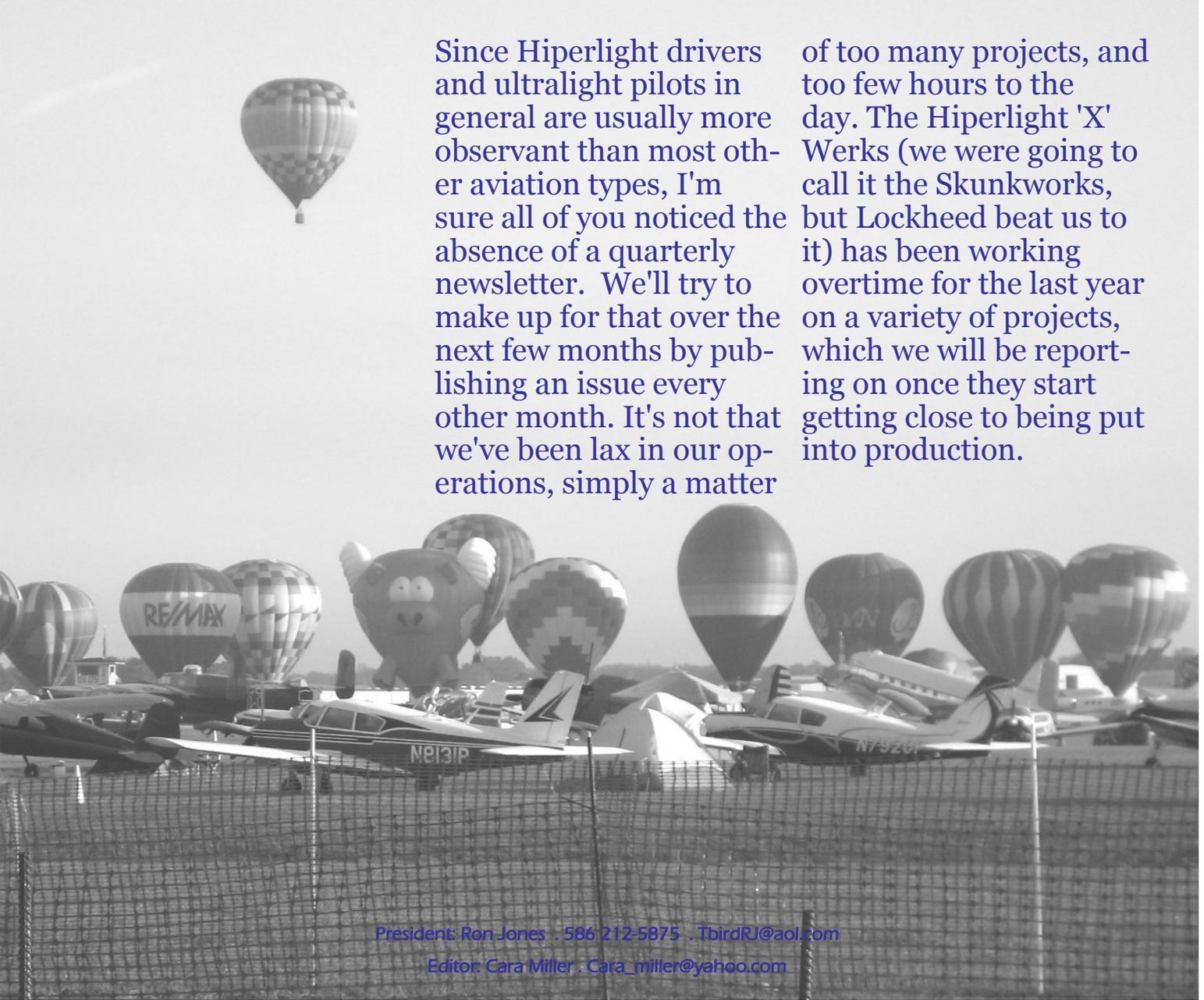
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The Official Newsletter of the  
Hiperlight

[http://  
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## Inside this Issue:

Hiperlight Happenings	2-3
What's New	3-5
Featured Pilot	6
Flight Line	7-8
Classifieds	9-10



Since Hiperlight drivers and ultralight pilots in general are usually more observant than most other aviation types, I'm sure all of you noticed the absence of a quarterly newsletter. We'll try to make up for that over the next few months by publishing an issue every other month. It's not that we've been lax in our operations, simply a matter

of too many projects, and too few hours to the day. The Hiperlight 'X' Werks (we were going to call it the Skunkworks, but Lockheed beat us to it) has been working overtime for the last year on a variety of projects, which we will be reporting on once they start getting close to being put into production.

President: Ron Jones . 586 212-5875 . TbirdRJ@aol.com

Editor: Cara Miller . Cara\_miller@yahoo.com

# Hiperlight Happenings

Looking back to early fall of 2013, we were busy getting ready for Sun 'N Fun 2014 in Lakeland, FL when we got a call from a gentleman named Bruno Rubio in Athens, Georgia, inquiring about the possibility of having us build a non working replica of a Hiperlight for a restaurant he was planning on opening. Naturally, my first question was "Is it an aviation themed restaurant"? He said no. OK, now I'm really confused. He went on to explain however, that he was from the country of Peru, and in the Peruvian desert, near the town of Nazca, there were a series of lines, animals, geometric figures, and also human like carvings in the sand on the desert floor, believed to be over 2500 years old. You're probably wondering where this is going, right? These lines were reportedly discovered when sometime around 1930 a pilot flew over in, you guessed it, a biplane. Bruno is replicating the discovery of the Nazca lines in his new restaurant, which originally was an 8000 square foot warehouse. Over a year and a half of hard work on Bruno's part has transformed this warehouse into one amazing restaurant, with several of the Nazca lines such as a hummingbird, a monkey, and a spider painted on the floor, some as large as 30 feet long, and the replica Hiperlight suspended from the ceiling. For the past 8 years, Bru-

no has owned and operated a small restaurant 5 or 6 miles from the new one, and specializes in Cuban and South American cuisine. I've never been a fan of onions or Jalapeno peppers, but after having one of Bruno's Cuban sandwich's, I've gained a whole new appreciation them. The food is absolutely incredible.

After the deal was made to build, deliver and install the plane, the real work began in earnest. We were already busy getting ready for Sun 'N Fun, I had just brought in an entirely new crew, which, even though both of them have a substantial background, Hiperlights were an entirely new animal, not to mention building one that would never fly, but nonetheless still had to be constructed properly, and above all, look good. So it was on the job training, while working against the clock. I think some of the paint was still wet when we loaded everything into the trailer for the trip south. But, for the most part, everything went as planned. Bruno

was able to open his restaurant for business on June 25th of this year. Like I mentioned, he did an absolutely amazing job of transforming a warehouse into a first class eatery, complete with a working fountain in the center of the restaurant. There is a loft overlooking the main floor and can accommodate private parties up to 30 people or so. The decor in the entire place is authentic South American. If you are every in the Atlanta, Georgia area, I highly recommend going taking the time to visit Bruno's restaurant, named Cali 'N Tito's. You won't be disappointed.



# Hiperlight Happenings Cont.



After a 2 year absence, the decision was made to pack up, head south, and have a display at the annual Sun 'N Fun airshow/flying in Lakeland, Florida. The weather was absolutely perfect, attendance seemed to be up from previous years, and it appears as though people are starting to spend money on aviation, in spite of the economy.

Early in the week, we were approached by local fellow named Travis Brown, who had flown into the Light Sport landing strip in a nicely built Kawasaki powered SNS-8 Hiperlight. We were fortunate enough to have him display his bird next to our 2 place Hiperlight, and also see it fly nearly every day of the show.

Plans are already being made for next year's event, hopefully with one or two more aircraft on hand.

## WHAT'S NEW

Last year at Airventure 2013, I noticed an ad hanging on the board in the Red Barn. It said simply that the tooling and rights for the SNS-7 Hiperbipe was for sale. For those not familiar with the Hiperbipe, this is the fire breathing big brother of the SNS-9 2 place Hiperlight. However, it was designed some 10 years before the SNS-9 made its appearance, and was intended to be capable of doing unlimited aerobatics, but yet offer comfortable cross country capability.

Fast forward to July of this year, the deal was finalized, and the tooling packed up and moved to its new home at Thunderbird Headquarters in Southeast Michigan. The prior owner, Rory Olson agreed to stay on as a partial owner,



demo pilot, and technical advisor. Rory is based at Galt Airport, which is approximately 60 miles Northwest of Chicago. He competed for several years in the Sportsman class.

We kind of gave you a hint in a couple of previous newsletters at what was going on, by showing you a couple of photos of Rory's plane. But now that

it's official, here is what the beast looks like sitting still. Awesome workmanship!

No price or delivery schedule has been set yet, but we are looking at the end of the year to have some fairly accurate figures.

# WHAT'S NEW CONT.

Most of you have heard the term "hundred dollar hamburger", basically meaning that most pilots won't think twice about spending \$100 in fuel to fly somewhere for an average \$5 hamburger. And, I'm no exception. For several years I would fly into a small field in mid-Michigan, to a small mom & pop restaurant for breakfast. The last couple of visits however, the place was closed for no apparent reason. Hmm, something wrong with this picture. Last October, several of us decided to fly in again for breakfast, only to find it still closed. Thinking that this is no way to run a business, if I was running it...

I was able to track down Rita Wesley, who had previously owned it, and operated it for several years. I was able to

get some background info and find out what would be involved in reopening. It looked like it might be a good opportunity, but knowing absolutely nothing about the restaurant business, I was a bit skeptical, to say the least. There were issues such as getting approval from the airport board of directors, dealing with the health dept., making sure the building was in the proper condition, getting the equipment back in working order, finding a cook and waitress, and those were just a few of my concerns.

Fast forward about 6 months. We had just endured one of the coldest and longest winters on record, so basically things had to be put on hold. First order of business was to put a request before the airport board of directors. Once the idea was put

out there, we had to come up with an operating plan and another appearance at next board meeting. Last and most important was the meeting which would determine if we were going to get the ok or not. On June 12, the board of directors voted and gave us unanimous thumbs up. We were finally good to go. Now we were racing the clock. The long winter had put things further back than we had originally planned. Original plan was to open the weekend of Memorial day. That obviously didn't happen. However, the airport was having a fairly good size Fly-In the weekend of June 27th-29th. That would be an ideal time to be open. Now we are in panic mode.

2 weeks from the proposed opening and no cook or wait staff. Without either one of those, we would crash and burn before we even got off the ground. Rita suggested putting a call in to the 2 girls that had worked for her a year and a half ago, even though they were working elsewhere. At this point, I'm open for anything. A quick meet & greet was arranged, and much to my surprise, I have never seen two people more excited to come back to work at a job they had previously, especially considering the way they had been let go by the previous owner, who had taken over for Rita. (That's another story for another time).

The last hurdle was setting



up an appointment with the county health department for an inspection. We were down to literally the last few days before the Fly-In. Due to other activities going on at the same time, the health department was over loaded, and under staffed. They were however able to stop by the last day before the Fly-In and give us temporary certificate to open for business.

What was interesting was that 800 miles South, my friend Bruno was doing the same thing. We both opened for business on June 28th.

We had squeaked in under the wire, and once again Crosswinds Cafe is open for business. One of the biggest draws on opening day was the Yankee Air force bringing in their WW2 B-17 bomber for us. OK, that's a



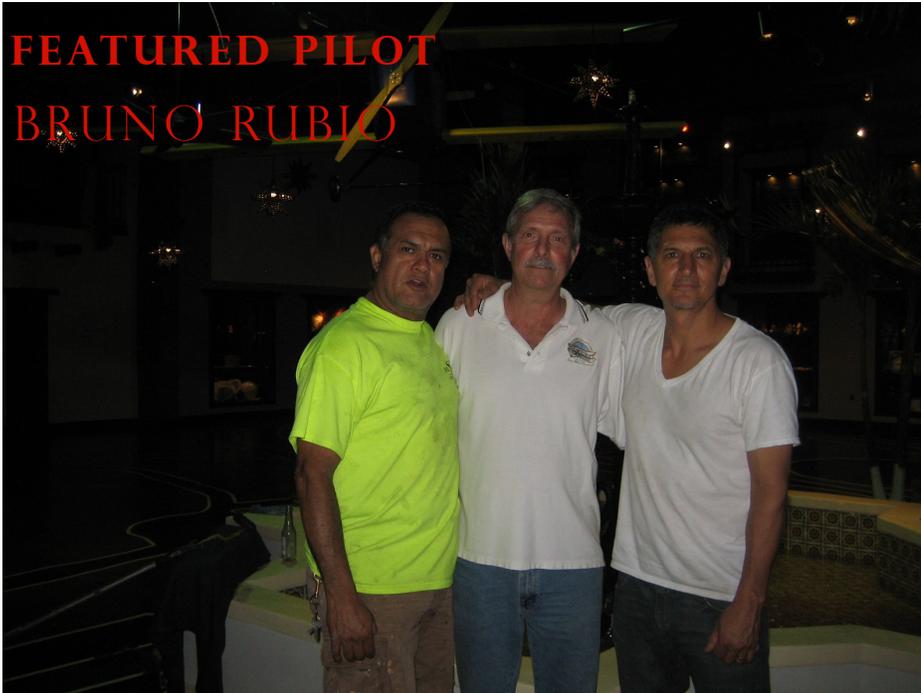
bit of a stretch, but the B-17 was part of a group of World War II aircraft that was on hand for the fly-in. Having him parked literally 10 feet from our front door was the best advertisement we could have asked for. I found out the pilot of

the B-17 was a local guy, and I thought I had struck a deal to trade hamburgers for flight time until he informed me just how many burgers it would take for just one hour of time in the cockpit.

It's been a lot of work, but I'm pleased to say that after less than 2 months of being in operation, a lot of the 'regulars' are coming back in, there are some new faces, and several folks that weren't aware of our location, right on the airport. For some people, it's their first exposure to aviation, being able to enjoy a meal while watching planes come and go at close range.



**FEATURED PILOT  
BRUNO RUBIO**



This is kind of a departure from the norm, but the situation was unique enough, we thought it deserved special recognition. Once we arrived in Athens, Georgia the installation of the replica Hiperlight was underway. Bruno went above and beyond what was expected, taking care of our meals and overnight accommodations. Not only did he take time out of his busy schedule to assist in the assembly, but also made his crew available to us as well. Pictured are Bruno on the right, and his uncle, Mack Rubio on the left, with yours tru-

ly in the middle. His cousin, Roberto Gil (not pictured) was a bit camera shy. What was interesting about these two, aside from the fact that

they are both extremely hard workers, Mack didn't speak a word of English, and I on the other hand didn't speak Spanish. Something about aviation however brings people together. During the entire assembly process, there was never a communication issue.

Bruno's restaurant, named Cali 'N Tito's, is located in Athens, Georgia, approximately 60 miles East of Atlanta. If you are in the Atlanta area, I highly recommend a stop to see Bruno. I guarantee you'll be glad to did.



# FLIGHT LINE



*Last but certainly not least, is a not so short rant from Steve Mahrle, who as a lot of you know now, spends most of his time hibernating deep within the bowels of a non-descript hanger somewhere in mid Wisconsin, also known as the Hiperlight 'X' Werks. He doesn't get out much, but occasionally we give him a new box of crayons, a stack of paper, and turn him loose.*

*He has, shall we say, a rather unique style of writing, so here for your reading pleasure is the next installment of Flight Line.*

It was brought to being as part of the legend of all great craft during the Rebellion, and became the T-65 X-Wing Starfighter, forever at odds with the Empire...

As in the line of all craft of distinction, the development of the X-Wing series began a long time ago on a faraway planet sailing through the outer arms of the Milky Way Galaxy by members of a group comprised of the Lost Planet Airmen, mentors of what the Jedi were to become.

These Airmen, members of society numbering in such small numbers that for all intent went unseen by most of their home planet Terra, held to a code of honor forged by the very needs of those who made their way through life by the demands of living in the air. The calling of: "Live to Fly, Fly to Live," was to them more than just a muse, but conveyed the essence of the meaning of their lives.

"In Flight we rely on our ability and entrust one another with our very lives based upon what we know to be truth. Truth in our work, truth in our written

## HIPERLIGHT AVIATION

records and truth in knowing of the honor to each other as well as those entrusted to our keeping, for the demands of Flight can accept nothing else."

Now it must be understood that from the stand point of others of Terra these Airmen seemed to be rather an odd group within the system of political or cultural activities. It was said that if one asked any 50 Airman how to achieve a given destination, each would find a different course and upon arrival demand the offerings of charred bovine, sufficient fuel for their craft as well as a proper place to relieve themselves of waste materials. It is said that these Airmen could be quite insistent that these simple demands were met.

Of course the level of technical ability, independent attitude, a code of honor, and a willingness to venture where others held dread, placed the Airmen under close observation as well as imposed mandates to comply with regulations written by (for the most part) by members of the controlling political regime who often did not venture far from their cube farmed Terra bound



environment. It may well be that this interaction was the beginnings of what evolved into the Rebel Alliance forever at odds for uncounted millennia across many galaxies against the Empire.

In the course of activity by Airmen there was an subset of these individuals who had mastered the art and science of designing and fabrication of craft which they, by their own hand, took to the skies and provided to other Airmen in the manner of freedom to enjoy the liberty found in such efforts. And with-in this was the catalyst which began the X-Wings..... These they called Thunderbird Aviation Hiperlights.

It is here where the story commences, deep within the R&D X-Werks of Thunderbird Aviation, that the long line of the X-wing Fighters begins, produced by Airmen for Airman in the ongoing efforts of reaching for the stars. It is the spring of the Year 2014 AD and after suffering through one of the worst winters of long memory of this planet it can be announced that



the newest of the Hiperlight design series is being readied for its flight test program. Designated as the Thunderbird Hiper X (THX) this craft is to serve as the developmental unit based upon the proven SNS-9 in the manner to comply with the imposed criteria of LSA requirements. The "X" (read 10) offers a series of upgrades in structural enhancements, increased internal fuel capacity, larger engine installations, easier maintained access, under wing pylon stores hard points for further extended fuel capacity, improved BRS installation, as well as two airfoil formats of wood

paint design of the T-65 holds to the original font of the THX. ( Kind of nice that after all the years of development our future space farers decided to keep with the original paint design, to bring it to bare against the Empire, don `t you think?)

So there you have it Pard, we all made it through a really tough winter and it `s time to get back into doing what we do best; Design, build and fly in the best traditions of what it means to be Airmen. Oh, and speaking of traditions , as Obe-Wan has his Yoda to keep him motivated in the right direction in the far off regions of space and time, THX is named "Hobie" as more than a hat-tip to keep me in line. We stand upon the shoulders of giants gone before.

Side note: Filming of the 7th Chapter of Star Wars began in May `14. Has this all led to a viral ad campaign? Now who wouldn `t want to be the first kid on the block to have his very own first generation X-wing Thunderbird Aviation Hiperlight?



wing construction (for those Airmen who would like the choice between wood or aluminum wing structures). It is worth noting here that the overall color and

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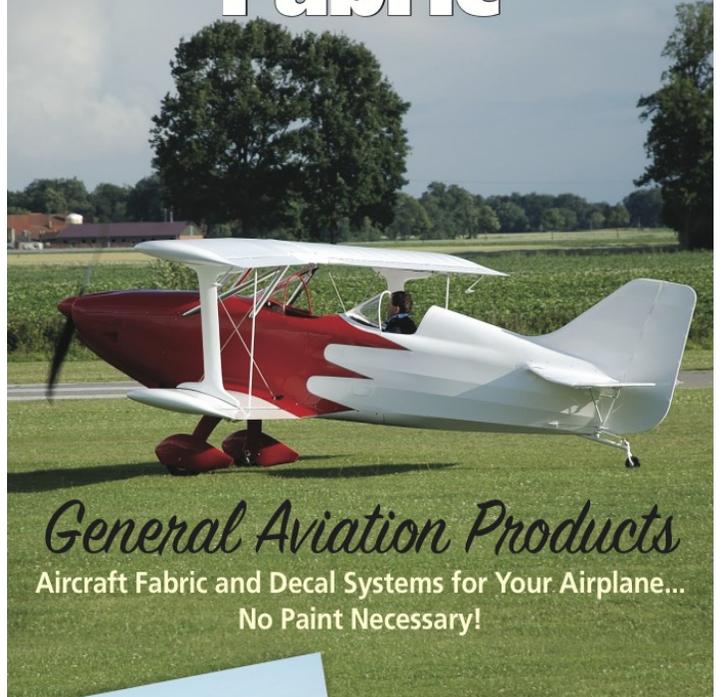
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