



# HANGAR TALK



Newsletter of The North Puget Sound Chapter of The Washington Pilot's Association. March 2008

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S HANGAR

### SPRING WILL SOON START SPRINGING

Now that temperatures are easing up and the prospect of longer days and better VFR, the thoughts of many pilots are turning to spring.

While flying in the winter has its rewards – the climb performance of my Cessna 172 is at its peak when

flying in the cold dense, dry air – it also brings a lot of challenges. Cold soaked engines do not want to start. The preflight can be very cold to do. The weather can be anything from good VFR to fog, heavy rain and possibly a few thunder bumpers mixed in.

Whether the weather has had you grounded for a few days to a few months, springtime is a perfect time to spring clean your flying skills for a summer of fun, camaraderie and admiration of our fine flying machines.

All pilots can benefit from a review of aircraft preflight skills. What are the telltale signs that a bird is using an aircraft as its nesting ground? A bird's nest can

render an aircraft unairworthy in no time.

If you're in the solo stage of training – or already have a pilot certificate – challenge yourself on a breezy day to improve your cross wind landing techniques. Your flight instructor will be glad to accompany you.

Certificated pilots, evaluate your personal flight minimums and limitations – what weather conditions will you accept to comfortably complete a flight? Personal minimums are a great tool for avoiding "get-there-itis" and other external pressures. Personal minimums that are higher than the FAA's minimums, especially early in the flying season if you haven't flown much recently, are a sign of a responsible pilot.

There are also an abundance of online resources to sharpen skills as well and of course one of my favorites is AOPA's Air Safety Foundation (ASF) and you don't even have to be a member to benefit from this great resource.

I'm looking forward to a summer filled with blue skies and fly-ins.

Chip LaPlante  
President  
North Sound Chapter

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"Spring  
clean your  
flying skills"

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### Trivia Corner

How many Air  
Route Traffic  
Control Centers  
in the U.S.?

*Answer on  
next page.*

## LIGHT SPORT AVIATION IN THE NW



### **Evektor Sportstar**

After three years, and lots of hoopla, many people wonder how the Light Sport Movement is faring here in the Northwest. As a flight school owner at Arlington Airport, I would say that Light Sport has taken off, but has not yet reached altitude.

One of the limiting factors in light sport to date has been the relatively few flight schools that have offered training, partially because no-one seemed to fully understand the rules, and it was difficult to find a qualified aircraft. Getting the CFIs, the local examiners, and the aircraft manufacturers up to speed ate up the first couple of years following the official FAA approval of this new class and category in the fall of 2004.

Over the last year, however, a number of flight schools in the Northwest have added a light sport aircraft to their fleet. We started our light sport efforts early in the game with an Aeronca Champ, figuring it would fill two bills – light sport and tailwheel. It received a fair amount of light sport business until we added an Evektor Sportstar. Brand new, shiny, and modern, the Sportstar siphoned most of the light sport students from the Champ. Indeed, the Sportstar has become one of our most popular aircraft for LSA students, private students and renters as well.

*Answer from  
Page 1.*

There are 28  
ARTCC's in the  
U.S

Unlike some of the LSA, the Evektor Sportstar is an ideal trainer as it has sturdy aluminum construction, hearty landing gear (for those occasional firm landings) and flies beautifully. It is comfortable, with great visibility, a panel complete with GPS, and its Rotax 912 engine is very economical. Other aircraft that have been used in NW training facilities are the Technam Bravo, Echo, and Sierra, all fine flying aircraft.

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Now that many flight schools are finally able to offer LS training and manufacturers are able to keep up better with demand (buyers no longer are told there is a 6 month waiting list to get the aircraft of their choice), I believe we will see Light Sport grow even further. Unlike the recreational pilot license which never really took off (only a couple hundred total licenses issued), light sport has proved its validity with the number of students who have earned their licenses (a couple thousand already) and the number of sport aircraft that have entered the market (hundreds of flavors available).

According to Earl Lawrence, Vice President of Industry and Regulatory Affairs for EAA, the fact that Cessna has jumped into the light sport market gives "a stamp of approval on the whole process." In addition, a number of dealers, like Light Sport Airplanes, West, are investing in these aircraft in a big way. According to Gordon Suttie, CEO of LSA, West, "There are now many great light sport aircraft on the market, each with its own unique blend. With multiple aircraft and manufacturers to choose from, we offer a comprehensive range of airplanes with the goal of matching any pilot's flying mission."

Of course, some people are shocked by the price of the new LS models (most hover somewhere just over the \$100k mark). Apparently, they expected them to be in the price range of an SUV. Personally, I don't think the place to save money is on a vehicle that is going to take you and your loved ones thousands of feet into the air. Mr. Lawrence of the EAA points out that Light Sport has "reduced the price of new aircraft by at least half." A few years ago you couldn't touch a brand new aircraft for under 200k and now there are many to choose from for under 100k. And they are still new - new panel, new metal, new engine. Most are built with the Rotax engines which are simple, reliable, economical, and significantly reduce the aircraft's operating costs.

In the real world, economy and fun don't often go together. But in the case of Light Sport Aviation, the right combination of economy and fun was achieved. Economies are found in the reduced costs of training, on more affordable aircraft, and on reduced operating costs of owning your own aircraft. And the fun is apparent as soon as you take off - most of these LSAs are very sporty and fun to fly.

With CFIs, flight schools, and examiners finally up to speed on the light sport program, and with manufacturers ready with many great choices in aircraft, I don't doubt that Light Sport Aviation, here in the Northwest and elsewhere, will soon reach altitude.

Submitted by Cathy Mighell  
Out of the Blue Aviation, Inc.    Arlington Airport    360-474-1060

## FBO News

### Bellingham Aviation Services



Winter 2008 has proved a busy time here at BAS. We were sad to see Carla Bellair leave, but glad to welcome Lara Bettis, our new customer service representative. Stop by and introduce yourself if you haven't already. I spent a good portion of January, and the beginning of February in Florida, where I trained for and received a CE525(s) type rating. Jason Hart attended the Schedulers and Dispatchers Convention in Savannah, GA, and Scott Bethke, our director of maintenance is presently away for additional type training.

In the flight school, we've benefited from many committed students/renters and from some fantastic February weather. I looked back into our past flight logs and February 08 is certainly a banner month for our 172, N 3 0 5 1 E . Congratulations are in order for John Paul McKelvey, who flew 51E on two consecutive days for two successful checkrides. He passed his Private on February 23 and his Instrument on February 24. Of course, he already had a wallet full of licenses and ratings from the United Kingdom, but it's still a fair accomplishment.

Brush up on wake turbulence avoidance procedures. You may have read in the Bellingham Herald that Allegiant Air is making KBLI a "home base." That means

approximately twice as many MD83 operations as we're used to. In addition to keeping track of takeoff/touchdown points, be sure to consider the effect of wind on descending vortices. Don't forget to be mindful of glidepath and climbout angles as well.

Our midday markdown on 100LL is still in effect. Between 1000 and 1400, save 15 cents/gallon off the normal price out of the truck.

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***"midday  
markdown  
still in ef-  
fect"***

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Thanks again for your friendship and patronage. Fly safe and have a great March.

Jeff Eriksen



**A Eurocopter**





## OTHER NEWS

### NSC-WPA AWARDS EDUCATION GRANT



At our last meeting of February 14th, April Phillips of Bellingham Aero Line Service was awarded a \$500 grant in recognition of her hard work and dedication to aviation. The grant was awarded to help further her Aviation Education and Career.

April currently holds a Private Pilot certificate Single Engine Land and has almost completed her instrument rating.

She is in the running for a scholarship and will be in San Diego the night of our next meeting to compete. Good Luck April!



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## A Bellingham Pilot Is Honored



Another Whatcom pilot has been honored with the prestigious **Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award**. Few, indeed, are the pilots who have garnered the requirements to be eligible for this most coveted title! To qualify, one must have maintained a current medical for 50 consecutive years. Those 50 years must have been incident and accident free, and, additionally, the candidate must be recommended by a minimum of two fellow pilots who can testify to the character and worthiness of the applicant.

On February 22nd, Dave May, supervisor of the Seattle FSDO traveled to Bellingham to confer the Wright Brothers Award upon Ray Breakey senior. Not only did Ray qualify for the award, but his most unique aviation history compelled Dave May to personally attend the large family gathering in Bellingham. It was an evening to celebrate an entire family's long dedication to bring this award to fruition. The following members of the family were, one by one, tutored, instructed, and enchanted by the world of aviation due to the dedicated efforts of Ray senior over the past 50 years. They, in turn, each had recommended Ray for the award. At the ceremony, they read their letters to Ray.

Raymond Lee Breakey (Ray's oldest son)

Buck Breakey (Ray's younger son)

Jami Aeschliman (grand-daughter)

Jim-Ray Higginson (considered a grandson)

Jake Breakey (grandson)

Andy Breakey (grandson)

Ralph Lane (Jim Higginson's son-in-law)

Jim Higginson (brother-in-law)

It is truly an amazing heritage of aviation that Ray has established

*Continued on next page*

## **A Bellingham Pilot Is Honored**

*Continued previous page*

within his family. Congratulations Ray Breakey!

The following is one of the eight letters that was read the evening of the presentation, leaving hardly a dry eye in the house!

Raymond Jennings Breakey, 86 years young, still a licensed pilot! I have flown with Ray off and on every Sunday since the fall of 1962, so we have thousands of hours in the air together! I gained much of my courage and many of my good flying habits from this exceptional pilot.

For years, Ray flew a plane from the Whatcom Flyers Club, until 1959 or 60 when he purchased N5756C, a Cessna 170B. As a teenager, I loved to go flying with him. I wanted to "steer" the plane around, but Ray had me listening for A and N signals on the old direction finder. He always figured that a pilot should know and understand all the latest gizmos!

Work was definitely stressful, operating a car dealership and maintenance shop with 14 employees, and raising a family with four of his own kids plus my sister and myself, since we had lost our folks in a car accident. When the stress would become too much for him, he'd jump in the 170 and fly out to Stuart Island in the San Juans, walk to the beach and shuck a few oysters, taking them from the shell with his pocket knife. An hour later, he'd be back in the city, ready to face whatever the problem of the day was!

Ray moved up to a Cessna 185 in the mid sixties, and he routinely filled all six seats, flying drivers to California to bring trucks home or to Reno to retrieve rental cars. I had my pilot's license by then too, and I learned how much ice the Cessna could carry as Ray was no stranger to flying "actual IFR" all year round. He had gained his instrument rating early in the 60's, back when it was pretty unusual for pilots to have one. Ray loved to quote Ed Sandin, his highly qualified, former SAC pilot – instructor, when they'd be picking up a load of ice, or getting a little off-course on an ADF approach: "Well don't just sit there like a cold jug of pee. Do something!!"

Ray flew a lot of actual IFR and had great faith in his 185, N9865X. "It's got enough power to keep a damn fool out of trouble!" he'd quip, but those who knew Ray also knew he was no "damn fool!" He certainly flew his plane to its limits, but always had the good judgment to know when enough was enough. I can remember his telling me, "You're not a real pilot until you've ridden home on a Greyhound bus!"

I can remember another pilot and flight instructor, Hap Watkinson, telling me how Ray kept his cool in an emergency. They were flying into San Francisco in the 185, carrying a load of ice, when the vacuum pump failed, leaving them on "partial panel." The magnetic compass was up high on the windshield divider, and of course the

## **A Bellingham Pilot Is Honored**

*Continued previous page*

DG was useless, a gyro no longer spinning. "Hap," Ray said, "You just call out the headings on the compass up there, and I'll keep the old girl right side up!"

Ray has always had the respect of those who knew him, and as a pilot this was even more evident. Just flying around the country in a big tail dragger got him some nice comments from controllers, but he always maintained his humility, an important part of being a great pilot. In later years, Ray has become less adventuresome, limiting his flying to the local area, but including some challenging strips in the beautiful San Juans. I've known Ray as a pilot 'on the way up' as he was earning his ratings, and also now, in the twilight of his flying career. I can state with some authority that Ray has never exceeded his ability with a flying challenge. Some would criticize him for carrying ice with the 185. Others would say that 40 knots was too much wind to be flying in. But Ray handled it all just fine, always giving credit to the airplane, never bragging about his accomplishments. To this day, his judgment has remained perfect. He's always known where to draw the line, and I don't know of anything more complimentary that can be said of any pilot!

---

Jim Higginson, brother-in-law and pilot  
CFII 1563103 exp.1-09  
about the writer:

I got the flying bug from Ray, and he got me started, buying a J-3 and setting me up with his old flight instructor, Paul Mitchell. I went on to an airline career and retired about 3 years ago

In the late 80's, Ray sold the 185 and came into the 182 with me, as half owner. Just last Sunday, since I was out of town, Ray took the Cessna 182 over to Lopez Island and return on his own, and he still does a very nice job. We also have a 150, 'for the kids' and if the 182 is not available, Ray eases himself into the little two-place and does just fine, after the hard part, of getting in!

July 19, 2007

Do you know of a pilot who might also qualify for this award? Such achievements should not go unrecognized! Please contact Maureen Griggs (734-9013) if you are aware of a fellow aviator whom you feel should be so honored.





# Washington Pilots Association North Sound Chapter



## **March Meeting Speaker**

**Jeff Eriksen**

**From**

**Bellingham Aviation Services**

**Will give a presentation on:**

**“Light Sport Aviation”  
and  
“Light Sport Aircraft”**

**Come and learn all about the new  
Category and Class for pilots and  
Aircraft.**

When: Thursday March 13th. Doors open at 6:30pm  
Time: 7:00pm

Where: GA Terminal Conference Room.  
Everyone and Anyone are welcome to attend.



## North Sound Chapter WPA Control Tower

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*Deadline for the next issue is  
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## JOIN NOW

Join your fellow pilots and aviation enthusiasts. Become a member of the North Sound Chapter of the Washington Pilots' Association. The North Sound Chapter represents members from Whatcom, Skagit, and San Juan Counties. To be a member, you need not be a pilot but only have an interest in and promote general aviation.

name (last, first, middle initial)

spouse if applicable (last, first, middle initial)

address (street, apartment number)

city

state

zip

phone number

email address

The \$31 Chapter dues are comprised of \$19 State and \$12 Local dues. Also offered, on a voluntary basis, is a year subscription to the GA News for \$25.

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### LOCAL DUES

\_\_\_\_\_ \$12 ALL

### GA NEWS

\_\_\_\_\_ \$25 VOLUNTARY

### TOTAL ENCLOSED

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Please mail completed form and check (payable to North Sound WPA) to Paul Zosel, North Sound Chapter WPA Treasurer, 2719 Willow Lane, Bellingham, WA, 98226.

NSC



## **SPONSORS**

The Hangar Talk Newsletter Mails out 100 Plus copies each month. Most of these copies, of course, go to members of the North Sound Chapter of the Washington Pilots Association. However there are numerous copies mailed to interested persons and companies outside the membership. Some copies go to the State entities such as the State WPA President and editor of the Wings publication. We believe the Hangar Talk reaches a surprising number of people.

We wish to offer to all interested persons and businesses to advertise their services in Hangar Talk. A sum of \$50 will purchase a year (10 issues) of business card advertising. Please send a check payable to North Sound WPA and a business card to Paul Zosel North Sound Chapter Treasurer, 2719 Willow Lane, Bellingham, WA 98226

