

# *The Trailing Edge*

August 2023

## **AirVenture Oshkosh 2023 Photo Essay**

In 2023, I finally returned to AirVenture, having last been there in 2014. This time I flew out with Glenn Nicholson in the right seat. Meeting us at Wittman Field as our “Ubernator” was Stormy Weathers, joined later by his son John Weathers.

### **Flying Out**



**We worked more this time on minimizing the amount of stuff we needed to carry. We managed to keep the takeoff gross weight down to 2570 pounds. This time I was able to put the cargo net over the stuff to hopefully keep it under control if there was another negative g upset. I don't know how people fly long distances for a week in a two seat airplane. Where do they put their stuff?**



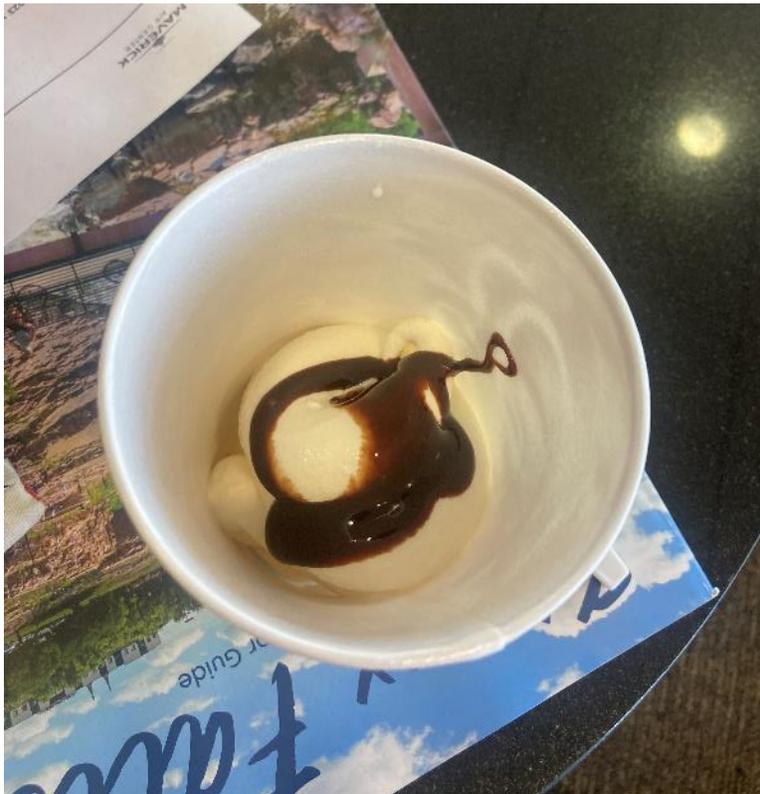
**On the ground getting fuel at Cedar City UT**



**To get through the Rockies, we flew north to Provo UT. Flying from Provo to Heber City, we flew over the Provo River through the Provo Canyon. It's weird how this long ridge just suddenly drops down in a "V" to let the Provo River through. To get through here, we were sucking on the oxygen at 11,500 feet MSL.**



**RON (Remain Over Night) was at Rapid City (KRAP – still the best airport identifier ever) on PSP (Pierced Steel Planking – gives that WWII South Pacific vibe). This is the very location that I discovered the fractured alternator back in 2009. Feeling a little nervous, I checked the current alternator and found it to be operational.**



**At our fuel stop at Sioux Falls SD (KFSD) the FBO had several complimentary snacks for pilots available, including soft serve ice cream. Even though it was morning, I couldn't pass up free ice cream.**



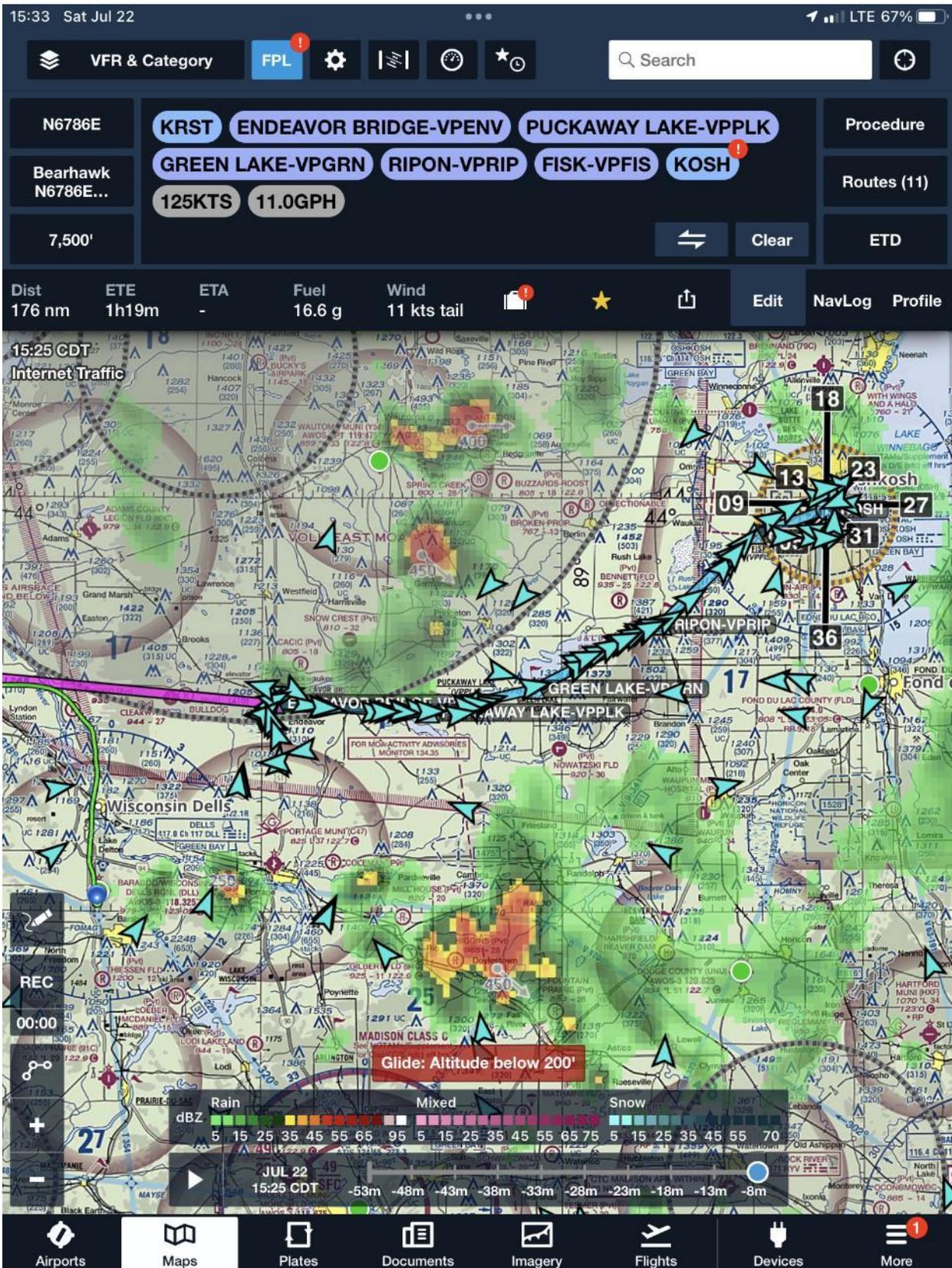
**As we approached KOSH, the FISK Approach was shut down because of thunderstorms covering the entire approach. We diverted into a wonderful little airport called Baraboo/Wisconsin Dells (KDLL) to wait out the storm. For some reason, we were offered pride of place right in front of the FBO.**



**About 20 to 30 of our newest friends also diverted into KDLL. The staff were ready, as apparently this sort of thing happens a few times during each AirVenture.**



**One of the aircraft diverted into KDLL was this RV-14 from the YouTube channel Flight Chops.**



Ever since the widespread adoption of ADS-B, every story of flying into AirVenture includes an obligatory screen shot like this showing the ridiculous amount of traffic we had to deal with. This is when the right seater's primary job is giving a running update on traffic in the area.



**Three Sigma parked in the usual spot near Homebuilt Headquarters**

## **On The AirVenture Grounds**



**For Father's Day, Tuki fabricated a custom duffel bag for me covered in Peanuts cartoons. I had her fabricate it to be compatible with a survival backpack strap for carrying it the 0.6 mile trek to the Ubernator. This strap is the actual one I fabricated during survival training in 1980. The bag is so heavy that the pressure on my chest is mashing on my innards, causing my stomach to bulge out. That's my story and I'm sticking to it!**



**Glenn was an AirVenture rookie, so it was imperative to get a picture of him in front of the iconic Brown Arch. Here is a picture of Stormy taking a picture of Glenn in front of the Brown Arch. Glenn is wearing a T-shirt that he bought in Rapid City, which says “I went through KRAP to get here”.**



**Sunday’s task was to go souvenir shopping in the EAA Warehouse before the stocks are depleted. I found these NASA Pumpkin Suits for kids. When I asked Tuki if she thought Emmy would like one, she said “You may never get her out of it”.**



**I took this picture for Kanard Kelly, since EAA Chapter 1326 has recently had an influx of new members from Middle Tennessee State University**



**We eventually ran into EAA Chapter 1000 alums Doug and Gail Dodson. Here Stormy and I visit them at their campsite.**



**On Sunday we were on our way to the Chapter Leadership Corn Roast and were diverted by a closed gate. On our diversion, we ran across a booth from Southern Illinois University, where they were selling these desk lights. I had this one made up custom with my Bearhawk.**

## **Bearhawks**



**At the Bearhawk booth, a Bearhawk Patrol 2 seater**



**Center of the booth was this Bearhawk Model 5, a monster with 6 seats**



**Backside of the Bearhawk Model 5. The new flap design goes all of the way to the wing root.**



A traditional 4-place Bearhawk

## Airplanes On and Above the Grounds



On the West Ramp (we never established who the sponsor was this year) was the NASA Super Guppy with the nose loading door open. In the foreground is a UH-60 Blackhawk in one of the several recruiting booths for the US Army. In the background is the tail of the Boeing Dreamlifter, the airliner that carries airliners.



**Another view of the Super Guppy with the nose hatch closed. Originally designed to carry the third stage of the Saturn V moon rocket, now it is used to carry all sorts of outsized cargo.**



**CV-22 Osprey and C-17 Globemaster III**



**A sea of happy people blocking the view of an AT-6, T-38, F-16, and KC-135. There was a large presence of military aircraft this year. Apparently the services finally figured out that AirVenture is a target-rich environment for recruiting**



**1939 Luscombe (pre-war) powered by a Continental A-65. This aircraft has been owned by same guy for 48 years. Very rare is that it still has the original wheel pants. For an airplane that barely goes as fast as your car on the highway, the wheel pants are more about looks than speed augmentation. Still looks good.**



**1946 (post-war) Luscombe 8A. Part of the much anticipated post-war general aviation boom.**



**This year was the 60th Anniversary of the Thorp T-18, so they were featured in their own row. I saw Tony Ginn's T-18 there, but he had left before I could get back to track him down.**



**Outside of Hangar D was this US Forest Service U-6 Beaver. They do have floats for it, but for this event decided to go with the wheels**



**In the back of the Beaver was this motor-driven seed spreader for dropping tree seeds. They have all sorts of other devices for dropping things that can fit here, such as a device for dropping live fish to restock lakes.**



**Other than the glass panels and modern radios, it still looks like a traditional Beaver**



**Van's Aircraft had the RV-15 prototype in the corner spot. It is still in development, with no promises made for when kits will be available. This is Van's offering for the booming high-wing, back-country market.**



**Electric aircraft are still working hard to make it into the mainstream. They work reasonably well except for that extremely short range issue. Here the Voltaero is on display trying to build support.**



**Also on display was the Opener, another electric airplane with a weird, sort of VTOL mode. It doesn't exactly hover like a helicopter, but it does jump off of the ground under propulsive lift with almost no ground roll.**



**One of our EAA Chapter 1000 alums was very big on the Switchblade, a flying car (actually motorcycle). He moved away, so I don't know what his status is. This version looks complete, but there was no mention of actual flight testing.**



**The back end of the Switchblade.**



**B-17 *Yankee Lady* from the Yankee Air Museum at Willow Run Airport, Ypsilanti MI, was selling rides this year, operating from a nearby airport. *Aluminum Overcast* was not available, as it is still undergoing some major maintenance**



**The Comp Air 6.2 was on display. I'm really surprised the company is still in business, considering that the Comp Airs were not very popular or well made in 2006**



**My cell phone doesn't have a great camera for long distance shots during airshows. This is the USAF Heritage Flight, led by a A-1 Skyraider, flanked by a P-51 Mustang and an F-22 Raptor**



**The US Navy Heritage Flight, with Corsairs in lead and slot and EA-18 Growlers on the wings**



**I don't remember the exact name of this aircraft, but it is one of the eVTOLs under development for Urban Air Mobility, which flew autonomously down the runway, stopped, turned, and flew back the other way. No report was made on how much battery capacity was used in this one minute flight.**



**A Gippsland GA-8 from Maxwell AFB was on display in the Civil Air Patrol booth. I'm not familiar with this aircraft type, but it looks like it has a large internal volume.**



**The Bugatti racer in the EAA Museum has been moved from over the stairs to the Air Racing gallery. We thought we were going to find out how it would have flown, but the replica crashed after very little flight time.**



**If you are going to fly your record setting ultralight, be sure to take Snoopy along with you. He is a WWI Flying Ace and thus an excellent instructor**



I'm always fascinated by the Pitcairn autogiro, even if it wasn't very practical and had questionable flying qualities



This C-123 with nose art as the "Thunder Pig" from the Air Heritage Museum, has Porky Pig sitting in the cockpit as the pilot.



**The relatively new Cessna Skycourier in service with FedEx. The pilot we spoke to was very bullish on what a great airplane it is for FedEx. One of the most significant capabilities is the ability to load standard baggage containers in the fuselage.**



**Stormy recreates Doc's pose with the second airworthy B-29**

## Ford Trimotor



This year I took the time to get a Pax Qual on the Ford Trimotor. Watch for a separate report on that. Henry Ford built 199 trimotors. He stopped there, because if he had built one more he would have had to get a Type Certificate for the design, and he didn't want to mess with the government.



After the flight, demonstrating my best *Project Police* pointing technique. An EAA volunteer is always available to take this type picture immediately after each flight. It had been raining that morning, necessitating the use of the rain coat.

## Seaplane Base



**Piper J-3 Cub. Since this airplane barely has enough power to fly off of land, it must be real fun on floats**



**An Aeronca Champ on floats. Another very underpowered seaplane.**



**We assumed the N-number on this one meant “A Cessna 185 for Jimmy Doolittle”. I texted JD3 to come pick it up, but I don’t think he did.**



**A Canadian Lake Amphibian on the lake**



**A Beaver in its natural environment—on floats. Meanwhile, Glenn contemplates what an RV-8 would look like on floats and which South Carolina lake he could fly it off of.**

### **EAA Chapter Activities**



**On Sunday night, the EAA Chapter Office hosted a Chapter Leaders Corn Roast. While EAA Chapter 1000 is defunct, Stormy is the newsletter editor for Chapter 661, and invited me as his “+1”. Offerings included corn on the cob, hamburger, and Shasta Cola.**





Saturday was the Chapter Leaders Breakfast, and I accompanied Stormy once more. Several speeches were made by folks such as Jack Pelton, and some chapter awards were given out.

## Swinefest



Since 2006, the high point of AirVenture has been the Swinefest with the Yoopers of EAA Chapter 439.



**The rotisserie roaster where the pig roasting is done.**



**Standing in line for the serving**



**The EAA Chapter 1000 alum table, with Jimmy Doolittle III, John Weathers, Glenn Nicholson, Gary Aldrich, and Stormy Weathers**



**My Swinefest plate, featuring Pulled Pork, beans, dressing, corn on the cob (popular in the Midwest), potato salad, jello and Pepsi.**

## Weird Things You See at Oshkosh



The NASA area, with an inflatable Space Transportation System (STS) (I thought it was bigger than that), an inflatable astronaut (I thought they were smaller than that), and an inflatable X-59 that I don't think will make it to supersonic speeds



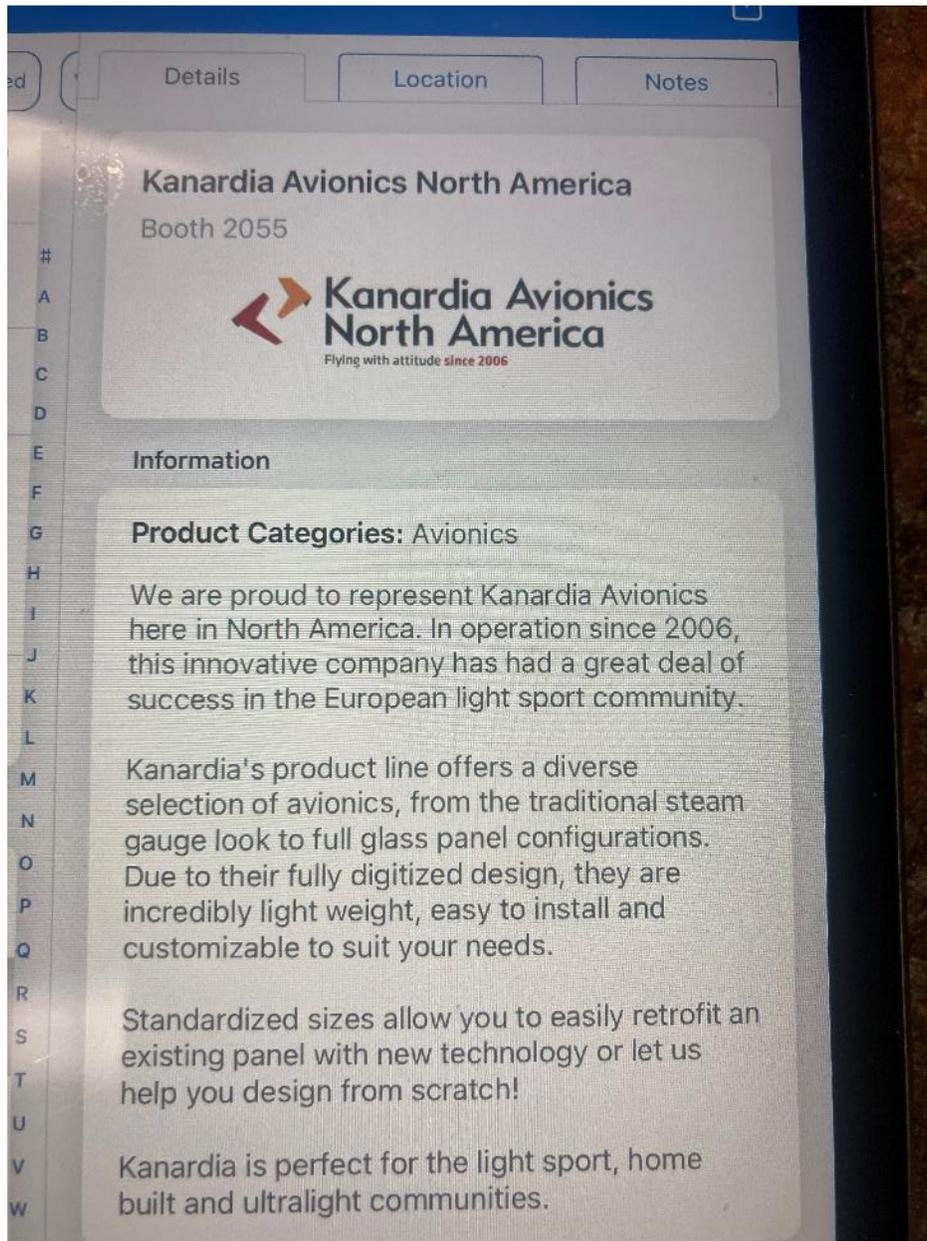
I'm probably the only person on the whole field who would get excited about this. This is the Zipline drone which has been used in Rwanda to deliver medications and missions at several other locations. I looked at the Pitot tube and immediately recognized the baffles which are used for water separation to keep water out of the Pitot system.



**This airplane had me confused in all sorts of ways. It says “Thunderbird” on the side. It doesn’t look like any of the machines on Tracy Island. The USAF Thunderbirds never flew P-51s, and especially not B/C models. Finally, why is a Thunderbird painted in Blue Angels colors?**



**“Red” was on duty at his usual station next to the Theater In The Woods. No explanation was given for why he had a runway between his legs.**



**This popped up on my EAA AirVenture app. Apparently mission systems Technical Expert Randy “Kanard” Kelly has started an avionics line and named it after his call sign. I would have thought he would have mentioned something about it to me.**



**I would have caught a ride on this golf cart, but Marcie, Lucy, and Charlie Brown beat me to it.**



**On the front of the same golf cart, we finally find out “When Pigs Fly!”**



**Chick-Fil-A has joined the list of food vendors at AirVenture. Of course, it was packed, with the line reminiscent of just about any Chick-Fil-A Drive Thru. Just like the Chick-Fil-A Drive Thru, the line moved surprisingly fast. We can see that even ATC controllers like eating at Chick-Fil-A.**



**A Stearman “Starter Project” available in the Fly Mart. Note that this somewhat incomplete airplane comes with a giraffe pilot with helmet and goggles.**



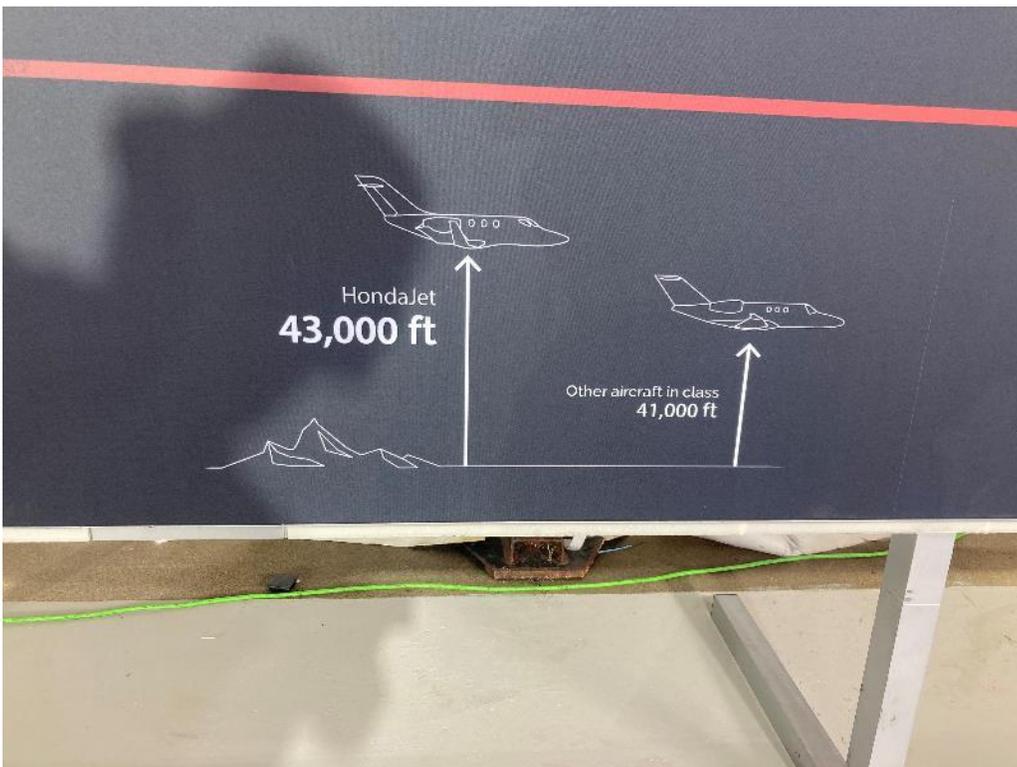
**What exactly is “International Federal”? I thought “Federal” described a government within a single nation. I think a visit to Conjunction Junction is in order here.**



**In the AOPA area they had this year’s sweepstakes aircraft, a Cessna 170, on display. I enjoyed the pipe insulation on the trailing edge for those not used to walking around high-winged Cessnas. I wonder how many foreheads were saved by bumping into foam?**



**Is it really a workshop if there is only room for one person? These workshop facilities seem a bit small.**



**Marketeers are obviously non-linear. This advertisement makes 2,000 feet look very big compared to 41,000 feet. They could at least label it “not to scale”.**



Likewise, a difference of 17 KTAS is huge compared to 405 KTAS. Then again, maybe the origin is about 20 feet to the left.



Apparently even invisible airplanes still need to be tied down. I tried following the QR code, but the web site looked sketchy.



Over in the “International Federal” hangar, I saw this guy who was doing a very good job of flying a Wright Flyer simulator. He wasn’t trying to fly it like a modern airplane, but was using “intense pilot compensation”, making tiny, abrupt inputs and monitoring the response. Probably a Cooper-Harper 9.



In the “Vintage Hangar” was this example of a “circa 1946 Vintage Workshop” with the walls clad in Oriented Strand Board (OSB). I question the authenticity, because OSB wasn’t invented until 1963. Does anybody else notice this stuff?



Wednesday was reported to be the hottest/most humid day of the show. I drained my whole Camelbak that day. I ordered the waffle cone vanilla soft serve shown here. I was able to eat about 90% of it, since in the process about 10% of it melted and ran down over my fingers and onto the ground.



A Subsonex jet piloted by Captain Walter Mitty. Who else?

## The Flight Back



Friday night at Kelly's bar (right next to the UWO dorms) was ended by a thunderstorm that required disassembling the awning over the outside seating because of high winds. This is Saturday night, when they didn't bother putting the awning back up.



Sunday morning about 0845, just before departure. In Grad School we determined that if only two cars are in the parking lot, they would be parked next to each other. In this case, the only other airplane near the Bearhawk is right in front of it. Most of the rest of the airplanes have already left.



**Our first stop out of Oshkosh was in Ames IA, home of Iowa State University. Here I kneel in formation with Cy the Cardinal, Iowa State University mascot and local pilot.**



**At the Colorado Springs airport, Glenn gets a selfie with the carved bear launching a model airplane**



We crossed the Rocky Mountains going home by flying V83-210 through the La Veta Pass, crossing Alamosa, and taking V368 through the Cumbres Pass out to Farmington. Going through the La Veta Pass we were at 12,500 feet MSL on the pressure altimeter. The temperature was 52F, which is ISA+20C, or qualitatively “hot”. The Dynon D-10A reports a density altitude of 14,740 (qualitatively “very high”). GPS altitude was showing 13,145 feet. It took a while to get up there. Because of the high temperatures the true airspeed was down from 122 knots to 116 knots.



**We landed at Kingman AZ in 17G24 winds, and I worried about the airplane blowing away as I tried to refuel it. I tied it down while we decided if we should delay departure. We decided to visit the airport restaurant for lunch. While we ate lunch, a giant downpour just over Kingman soaked the ramp and flooded the outdoor seating area.**

**- Russ Erb**