

# HIGH FLIGHT



## LAKEWAY AIRPARK DECEMBER 2005

### MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Where has the time gone? I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving and will have a wonderful Holiday season! Overall, 2005 has been a good year for our Airpark. We have a new building, some new members, and we have been safe.



Joe Bain  
Airpark President

We've had our hail storm, price hikes on fuel but were able to escape the ravages of hurricanes. I spent a week in Ft. Lauderdale a couple of weeks ago and not meeting Katrina or Wilma was a good thing for us.

I flew to Denton a few days ago. The President was at his ranch and the TFR was extended to 30 miles. After calling both the FSS and Austin TRACON, the consensus was that if I had flight following I could let them keep me clear and I would be allowed inside the 30 mile ring, just had to stay clear of the 10 mile ring. After Austin Approach forgot me, I was handed off to Gray approach about Temple. He didn't have any trouble with the rules - sent me due East for 30 miles (he forgot me too) and then handed me off to Waco approach. She sent me direct to DTO and handed me off to Regional approach just before the Class B airspace. He had no problem with the airspace rules either and told me he needed me West of DFW - so it was 270 degrees for 35 more miles. What a trip! I filed IFR on the return - almost direct.

The secret is - file some kind of flight plan - VFR or IFR and you can traverse the 30 mile

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### CHRISTMAS SING ALONG

Sunday --- Dec 4th---2:00 & 4:30

Plan to attend the Christmas Sing Along at the Lakeway Activity Center this year. There are 2 shows on Dec 4th at 2:00 & 4:30 PM.



You'll find several of your fellow airpark members participating in it on the stage. It isn't just singing—it is a show that benefits the Hudson Bend Fire Department Green Santa program

The only admission is an unwrapped gift for a child up to age 17 to go into the Green Santa bag that will be distributed to area families by the Hudson Bend FD Ladies Auxiliary at Christmas time to help brighten the Christmas of those less fortunate than we are. See you there.

### LAKEWAY AIRPARK BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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## Volksplane Adventure

By John Reinschmidt

In the Spring of 1991 I accepted a position with Motorola in Austin Texas. We were living in Puyallup Washington (45min S of Seattle) at the time. I started thinking of all the logistics of moving 3 cars and 2 airplanes, not to mention a full house of furnishings and such. Motorola came through on agreeing to ship one of my cars, so we could caravan 2 cars. A Motorola paid house hunting trip provided an opportunity to drive one of the cars and return via Airline. That left

the little problem of finding a suitable trailer for the VP and something to tow it with (Honda civics aren't much good for towing). Checking with U Haul and Rider revealed no suitable trucks with long enough cargo area to fit the fuselage, not to mention the over 1k cost. I started thinking about the ridiculous idea of flying the VP to Austin. I had never had the airplane over 7,000 ft before, and the 50hp Volkswagon engine was pretty much out of steam at that altitude. Not to mention the lack of radio or navigation equipment. I pulled out my stack of charts and started plotting the lowest elevation route from Seattle to Austin. It turned out that by flying down Rt 5 all the way to Bakersfield California then up over the hills at Tehachapi through to Phoenix, Tuscon, El Paso, and on to Austin, the highest terrain was somewhere around 5,000ft. Of course in late June I would have to contend with density altitude as well. Finally I decided what the heck, airplanes were built to fly and I would give it a try. If I couldn't make it all the way, I could always leave the aircraft and come back for it with a trailer later.

After seeing Debbie off the afternoon of June 19<sup>th</sup> 1991 (she was bound for NM in the Honda civic with David and Chelsea), I quickly packed and headed for the Puyallup Airport. I got airborne and SE bound at around 5:00 PM. I had packed a sleeping bag, several changes of clothes, 10mm, 12mm, 15mm wrenches, a sparkplug wrench with several spare plugs, several quarts of oil, sun tan lotion, a tarp, and tie down rope. My first destination was Woodland Washington to visit my good friend and fellow homebuilder Mark Edwards who had moved there 3 years earlier. I ran into rain at Kelso Washington, so I landed there and topped off the tank. The rain let up a little, and off I went on to Woodland. After flying in and out of some light rain, I landed at the tiny airstrip in Woodland around 7:00 PM logging 1.6 total. It was raining lightly and luckily there was an unused open covered parking spot, so Mark and I pushed the VP under cover and headed for his house. After a great visit with my old friend and flying buddy, it was off to sleep on my first night of a great flying adventure. The next morning dawned cloudy with heavy rain. I had noticed the evening before that the rain showers I had flown through earlier had badly eroded the plastic leading edge of my Hegy wood prop, so on his way to work Mark kindly drove me by a hardware store where I picked up some 5 min epoxy glue, sandpaper, and masking tape. I spent the morning repairing my prop leading edge, and sanding it back to shape. The rain continued all day, so I had to spend another night there in Woodland.

The next morning 6/21/91 dawned with low clouds and scattered light rain all about. This is the kind of weather I was used to flying in that part of the country. After checking with the FAA weather guy I learned that if I could get past Salem, it was clear sailing all the way South into California, but locally it was marginal VFR. I decided to give it a try. I took off and headed South down the

Columbia river at about 500ft. As I approached Portland I could see that I would not be able to climb much due to low clouds, so I just remained between 500 and 800ft above the ground following the river through town and picked up the highway heading to the SW. About a half hour South West of Portland I ran into rain again. The further south I flew the heavier it got. I was following interstate 5 South at that point, and considered turning around when finally I spotted the next airport, Aurora State. I flew a straight in landing just as the rain started coming down hard. While flying open cockpit in the rain, the windshield keeps most of the water off you, but once landed, the taxi to the ramp soaked me. I shut it down as soon as I could, jumped out and threw the tarp over the front half of the airplane. I logged .8 since departing Woodland. I pulled the VP over to the fuel pump and filled the tank while under the tarp making a kind of tent over the airplane and myself. After waiting for several hours, I finally could just make out the trees approximately 3 miles away to the South, and the rain was coming down lightly. So I decided to proceed and see how far South I could get. I quickly folded up the tarp and propped the little Volkswagen engine to life with light rain falling. I taxied as fast as I could and took off without delay. Once airborne, I started to dry out in the 75mph wind stream. By now it was 10:00AM on my third day and I was beginning to doubt I would be able to make it in the one week I had allotted for this adventure. The further South I flew, the better the weather got. About half way to Cottage Grove the low clouds started to break up and I could see patches of sunlight streaming through. It was the most beautiful sight to be cruising at 800-1000 feet over a rolling patchwork of green fields with filtered sunlight adding to the kaleidoscope of hues, not to mention finally warming from the early morning chill from several hours of flying in and out of rain in my thoroughly open cockpit. After 1.6hrs I landed at Cottage Grove around noon and was disappointed to find nothing to eat, not even a vending machine. Oh well, add food to the growing list of items I should have packed.

Now I had to start worrying about the mountain passes to come and wondering how my 50hp VW would manage. After fueling I headed outbound for Grants Pass Oregon. My log book for that leg notes simply "1.5hr, Bumpy 4000ft". Again the Grants Pass airport had nothing to eat and I was getting quite hungry, but off I went to a small airport at the base of Mt Shasta. The VP has an 11gal tank and my VW burns approximately 4gal/hr, so I figured my absolute maximum range was 2.5hrs, but I planned all my legs for 2 hrs or under. This leg would be the highest terrain of the whole trip. I took off and headed South following interstate 5 and climbed for about an hour finally reaching the lofty altitude of 6,500 ft. As I approached my destination airport, I held my altitude and mentally calculated my remaining range over and over in my head. I figured at my current ground speed (figured with watch and map, no GPS, no radio) I should be able to reach Redding at about 2hr 10min, and it was down hill to boot, so I would be pulling back on the power. I decided to make good use of my hard won altitude and proceeded on. As Mt. Shasta slid slowly by (very slowly), the turbulence picked up, not a good sign. The further South I went, the rougher it got, an indication that something was up with the winds. I calculated my ground speed over and over, and knew I was encountering headwinds. When your cruise speed is only 75mph, it doesn't take much headwind to take a bite out of only a 2hr range. About every 10 min I recalculated my ETA to Redding. I pulled the power back and started a slow cruise descent, and kept looking out for landing fields. I didn't know for sure if I would make the field at Redding until about 3 miles out and still at 2000 ft AGL I figured I had it made. I came over the end of the runway at 1500ft, pulled power and made a circling approach keeping well within gliding distance to the runway. Once I crossed

threshold at 500ft I started a slip (no flaps on this bird). The prop promptly stopped. I glided silently to an uneventful dead stick landing and then had to pull the airplane over to the fueling ramp. I had flown 2.5hr and burned 4.26gal/hr according to my logbook, using up 10.65 gal of my 11 gal tank. When I put the airplane into a slip, the fuel sloshed to the side of the tank uncovering the funnel drain at the bottom of the tank. That was the first and last time I ever pushed my fuel reserve in any airplane. By this time I was tired and hungry and glad to be on the ground. I contemplated spending the night, but there were still several hours of daylight. It was clear, and Colusa was about an hour and a half south.

I took off and was glad to finally have nothing but good landing fields below me in all directions. I cruised at 2000ft with a moderate headwind for 1.9 hrs landing at Coulsa about a half hour before sunset having flown 7.9hrs on my first full day of travel. I was tired and hungry, but glad to have made it this far. The lady at the field informed me there was a Burger King a short walk into town, so off I went. 3 miles later I staggered into the hamburger place, hungry, exhausted, with a throbbing headache. After wolfing down a burger and fries, I headed back toward the airport. I stopped by a market and picked up several bananas, apples, and energy bars. I tried hitchhiking with no luck and reached the airport about 11:00 PM. Now I remembered another item I had forgot to pack, a flashlight. After wandering around looking for a suitable place to put my sleeping bag, I found an old pickup truck parked behind a hanger. Since it was still warm out, I put the sleeping bag down in the open bed of the pickup and folded the tarp over me, using my change of jeans folded up for a pillow. Needless to say I didn't get much sleep that night. It took hours for my headache to dissipate, the temp dropped and I had to get into the sleeping bag, and then the wind picked up and blew most of the night. Finally, around 4:30 in the morning I could just see the beginnings of light peeking over the hills to the East. I couldn't sleep, so I got up and started packing up everything. By 5:00 there was just enough light to taxi by, so I cranked her up and headed out. The air was cool and still, and I climbed to 1000ft and headed South.

As the daylight broke and the sun crested the mountains to the East, I started to think this must be what it was like back in the 1920s as the airmail pilots headed out in their DH-4's following the railroads, nothing but a whisky compass, altimeter, and airspeed indicator. Folding and refolding the maps while flying in a drafty open cockpit was really a challenge especially in rain or gusty turbulence. After all the bad weather of the previous day, this was severe clear and calm, and I loved every minute of it. 1.7 uneventful hours later I landed at Oakdale north of Sacramento California. It wasn't even 7:00 AM yet, and the FBO wasn't open, so I pulled out my food stash and had a pleasant breakfast till someone arrived to open up the fuel pumps. By 7:40 I was on my way again. From Oakdale I continued south skirting Sacramento where I learned to fly way back in 1975 while attending Air Force Navigator School at Mather AFB. This area was quite familiar to me. Landing at Tulare after 1.7hr was uneventful and my log book states "finally my first tailwind".

On the next leg I planned to fly to Bakersfield than turn East and land at Tehachapi, one of the highest altitude airports along my route. It was only 1.3 hrs, but the winds and the hills made for a very bumpy ride. By the time I arrived at Tehachapi it was early afternoon and the temperatures were rising. After refueling, the departure was quite an adventure. The climb performance at the high density altitude airport was maybe 50-100ft/min and I made 3 circuits of the pattern just to reach 300ft AGL. The winds were gusting strongly from the NW, so I headed toward the eastern end of the valley figuring I could pick up some updraft off the ridge. Sure enough as I approached the hills I was lifted in strong turbulent updrafts. Finally I had enough altitude to clear the wind farm on the East end of the valley and headed out toward Mohave. My log notes read "marginal climb, slope soar to get to 6000ft, rough over wind farm".

Apple Valley airport was my next destination, and a strong tailwind got me there in early afternoon after a bumpy 1.3hr ride. By this time I was quite exhausted after traveling 16hrs the day before, with little sleep followed by 6 hrs of flying today. The pilots lounge was empty, and there was a big inviting sofa, so I decided to take a nap. About 6:00PM someone informed me they were closing up for the day. I checked my charts and figured there was enough daylight to fly one more leg. So off I went. When propping the VW I noted low compression on one cylinder. I climbed to 4,500 ft to clear some hills along the route and 1.2hrs later landed at 29 Palms just as the sun was beginning to set. I decided I needed some real sleep this night and inquired about a courtesy car. They didn't have one, but rented me an old wreck for \$10, a bargain I figured. After a good nights sleep in the Econo-lodge, I got out to the airport well before daybreak and was ready to launch at first hint of light.

Once again I climbed to 4000ft in the cool still early morning air and watched the sun rise. After crossing some more low mountains and flying 1.2hr, I landed at Blythe and the line girl was amazed at my little open cockpit airplane. She took a picture for the bulletin board. I was just grateful they were open for fuel at such an early hour. I picked up Interstate 10 heading into Phoenix. I flew down the frontage road at about 400ft and watched as trucks and cars slowly passed me, and little kids in the back of station wagons eyes wide in amazement waved at me. After 1.9hr of smooth low altitude cruising, I landed at Buckeye airport East of Phoenix. Here there was nobody to unlock the fuel pumps. After a frustrating 1hr wait I finally got back on my way.

I skirted southwest of Phoenix and headed out across the desert for Tucson. Navigating was a challenge with no roads to follow and nothing but empty desert in all directions. Finally I spotted the highway heading into Tucson, and approached the Marana airport. Upon landing as I slowed to taxi, the engine promptly quit and no amount of propping that hot engine would bring her back to life. I started pulling the VP along the taxiway when a very nice person drove up in a pickup and offered to help. We tied rope from the landing gear to the rear bumper and he towed me toward the hangers. A very nice man and his wife offered to let me use the shade of their hanger to work on the VP. They had matching his and hers Christian Eagles and were practicing acrobatics for an up coming meet. I knew my engine problem most likely was a burnt valve since I had no compression on the left rear cylinder. I pulled out my tools, pulled the cylinder and disassembled the valve. I inquired about a ride into town and someone who was heading in graciously offered to give me a lift. I purchased some valve grinding compound at the local auto parts store, and eventually my ride came by to give me a lift back to the airport. After I lapped the valve and reassembled the engine, I decided to change out that sparkplug with one of my spares, a decision I would later regret. I test ran the engine and it started right up and ran strong. By this time it was early evening and I was tired, some of the highest terrain lay ahead of me. I called it quits for the day and my hanger hosts offered to give me a ride into town. I found a motel and called a local cab company arranging for a 4:30 ride out to the airport. The next morning 6/24/91 the VW fired right up, it was clear and cool, and I was ready to go.

At first light I took off and climbed out at a good 300-400 ft/min, not bad for a Volk-splane. I was just starting to relax about 5 miles from the airport at 2000ft when the engine started losing power and vibrating badly. I immediately turned back toward the airport and reduced power to the minimum needed to extend my glide. After an uneventful straight in to the nearest runway I taxied back to parking. The engine seemed to idle fine, and I ran her up with no problem. I had experienced a bad sparkplug (cracked ceramic) before, and all I could figure is my spare plug had been dropped sometime in the past. I swapped it out and chucked it.

Off I went again, only this time circling the field while climbing and staying within glide distance to the runway. The engine kept running strong after 5 min so I headed out toward the Eastern mountains. While climbing to clear the pass, I followed the railroad tracks (less steep path) and flew over the pass at about 500 ft clearance in the cool morning air. 1.8hr later I landed at Cochise Co., refueled and headed east for Deming, NM. I flew for 2 hours to make it to Deming and was surprised to only take on 7 gal of fuel. 3.5gal/hr was less than my usual fuel burn rate. At the FBO there was a large Density Altitude gauge reading 7,500ft, mystery solved! The VP was flying higher than ever before. The temperatures were climbing into the 90's so I hurried to get off for another leg of my journey. The runway at Deming was almost 7,000ft long so I figured I would have no problem taking off. The VW rolled only about 500 ft and lifted in ground effect, but then at 7500ft density altitude there just wasn't much climb. I crossed the end of the runway at about 50ft and headed out across a mix of desert and farm fields. I headed for the darkest patch of field I could find and eventually picked up some thermals. I finally reached the lofty altitude of 500ft AGL (or as my older crop-duster brother Pete would say, "nose bleed altitude").

The terrain was pretty flat all the way to my destination of El Paso, so I continued East at 500ft. Navigation was quite a chore with very little in the way of landmarks, but finally I spotted the mountains to the NE of El Paso. The old pilots at Deming had advised me the best way to circumnavigate the controlled airspace around El Paso was to fly down the Rio Grande River until I reached East of the city, so that is what I did. I was only at about 300ft as I came by the giant statue of the Virgin Mary on the Mexico side of the river (almost at eye level). I couldn't believe the difference in appearance of the Mexico slums and the El Paso high rise apartments. When I finally cleared the El Paso airport airspace ring, I gave the VW full power and left the cool air of the river to head out across the Eastern edge of the city for West Texas airport. At this point I was only able to maintain about 500 ft altitude and the air was getting rough. There were virtually no suitable emergency landing opportunities, and I nervously eyed the oil temp and pressure gauges. When I finally reached West Texas airport east of the city, I was unable to climb to pattern altitude, and circling the field I saw the windsock was straight out perpendicular to the single runway. I noticed a dirt road perpendicular to the runway leading into the airport, so I lined up directly into that strong wind and landed on the dirt road taking all of about 200ft to rollout. I taxied onto the airfield and pulled up to the fuel pumps. The nice girl who came out to greet me remarked "where did you come from, I didn't see you land". I just smiled and said I had flown in from Deming and needed fuel. The density altitude at the airport was 7,500ft and the winds were over 20 gusting to 30 directly across the runway, and I had no compression on the right rear cylinder, so I figured my flying day was over for now.

I pulled the VP over toward the hangers trying to find some shade and shelter from the dusty wind. Some nice people offered to help, and in no time I had the right head off and was about to lap the exhaust valve when an offer came to grind the bevel on it. One of the helpers had a valve grinding machine. It took him a while to adjust the grinder for my tiny valve but he finally got it done, and I lapped it to the seat. After reassembling the engine and test running it satisfactorily, I inquired about a courtesy car and was rewarded with an old beater. The nearest Motel was about 6 miles away so off I went. I found a restaurant with a Motel 6. After a quick meal, I was off to bed even though it wasn't dark yet. I was exhausted, but satisfied with my progress. My log notes read "7hr to go downhill all the way with a smiley face". At about 4:00 AM on the 25<sup>th</sup> I headed out for the airport. As I drove down the Interstate I was kicking myself for not writing down the exit number for the airport. In the dark nothing looked familiar.

I stopped at a 7-11, got coffee and inquired about directions to the West Texas airport. The guy said “what airport?” Needless to say I started to panic. After about an hour of driving around in the dark trying different roads, I finally found the right road and pulled into the airport at least a half hour after sunrise (so much for an early start).

The VW fired right up and off I went heading east into the rising sun. The early morning air was calm but I knew it wouldn't remain so. 2.1hrs later I landed at Culberson County, then another 1.8 hrs to Ft Stockton. I reached Ozona shortly after noon and another 1.8 hrs of low level VP cruising. The air was getting rough, and I was hungry. I decided the couple mile walk into town would be just what I needed. After a half hour walk I found a café and enjoyed a leisurely lunch. After all, I only had a little over 3 hrs flying time left and another day to go, so I was no longer in a hurry. After lunch I walked around the small West Texas town and decided to forgo the hot bumpy afternoon flying and spend the night. I found a cheap motel and took a nap.

The next morning 6/26/91 I was up early and walked the half hour out to the airport in the predawn darkness. I had the VW fired up and enjoyed my last early morning sunrise from 2000ft flying in shirt sleeves. I followed Interstate 10 to Kimble county 1.5hrs and then headed east for a brief 1.0hr flight to Fredericksburg. Leaving Fredericksburg the navigating became challenging again with no roads to follow, but I picked up the Perdenales River and eventually Lake Buchanan. Less than an hour later, I was circling Lakeway airport. I had made it! I landed at Lakeway 6/26/91 at 10:00AM, 7 days after departing Puyallup Washington. I had flown a total of 36.4hrs and made 23 stops, much of it cruising at or near the ceiling of my little 50hp VW powered homebuilt. Little did I know at that time that eventually I would come to live at this wonderful little airport.

John Reinschmidt

**Message From Your President  
(Continued From Page #1)**

ring - just stay clear of the 10 mile ring and talk to the controllers and have a discrete transponder code. It will save some time!

I'd like to wish everyone a safe Holiday and tailwinds both directions! I hope to see you all on the ramp in the coming year!

Joe Bain

**AIRPARK WORKDAY  
SATURDAY—DEC 10—8:30  
BOARD MEETING IMMEDIATELY  
FOLLOWING WORK DAY**

**NO SOCIAL DINNER FOR  
DECEMBER. WE'LL GATHER  
AGAIN IN JANUARY**  
Bonnie

**CHICKEN WINGS™**

BY MICHAEL AND STEFAN STRASSER

