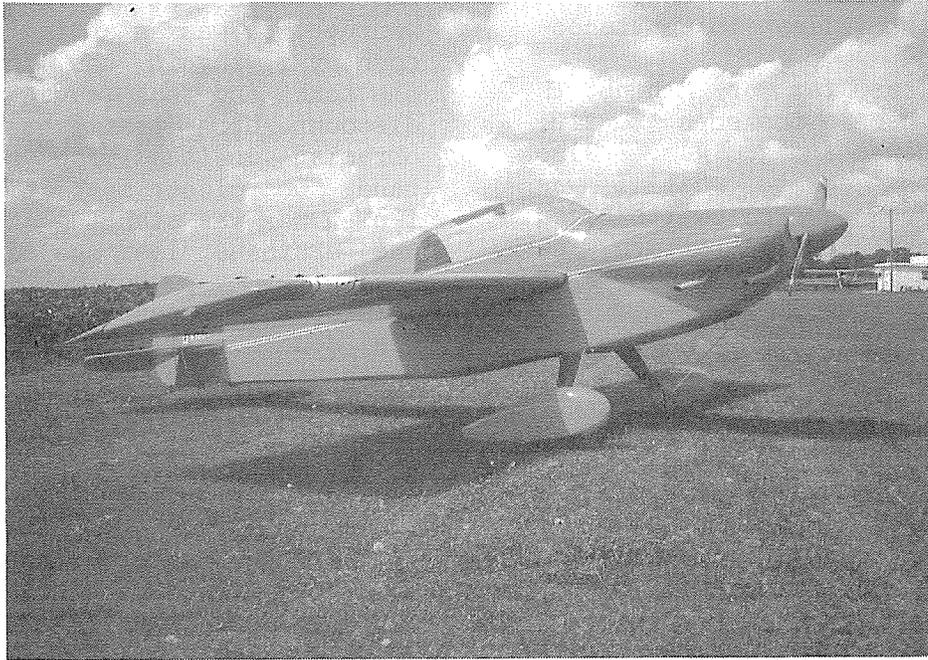

SONERAI

REUP 1993

NEWSLETTER



John Atkinson's Sonerai II

This is your Sonerai Newsletter Re-up Notice for 1993. The next official issue will be out at the first of the year, but as usual you are being coddled and reminded that the cost is still \$12.00 in the U.S. and \$15.00 overseas. I think some of the laziness on your part (with the need for this notice) has to do with the way you run the rest of your lives. Most of you probably need your wives or girlfriends (or both) to get you going on the weekends. You probably don't have a problem when it's time to go to Oshkosh or a Fly-in breakfast however.

We have made a giant leap into the mid 1980's and now have a better (286) computer with a hard drive and dual disc drives for either 5 1/4 or 3 1/2 stuff. So if you feel the need to send anything this way on a disc, we can handle it now. By the same notion, should anyone like the Electronic Sonerai Newsletter, it is now available on either size disc. This means that all the newsletter articles will fit on the 3 1/2 and I've been sending out two 5 1/4's to cover the older format. Price is the same either way -- \$ 10.00 US.

The following article was sent in by Keith Embree of 9250 Cadez Rd.

Cambridge, OH 43725

Yes, the prop was a Sterba and No, we don't know for sure what happened to it.

Although this would be my third trip to Sun N Fun, it was the first to fly my Sonerai there.

Friday morning the alarm was set for 5:30 AM. About 5:00 AM a voice in my dreams awoke me. I sat up in bed and looked at the clock and decided it was time to go. My wife grumbled and went back to sleep. When I got to the airport the heater wouldn't kick on so I loaded the airplane and waited in the cold for the sun. Six-thirty rolled around and I was off.

First leg was from Cambridge, OH to London, KY. This was about one hour and 50 min. About 65 miles north of there my oil pressure gauge made a couple of dips so I landed at a little strip at Moorehead. Everything checked out O.K. Just the nature of an electric gauge. I

hopped to Mt. Sterling for some fuel and was real glad to get inside and warm up. The OAT had been 20 F up to this point. I left there and headed due south to cross the mountains at Knoxville, then I would go down the valley to Chattanooga, TN.

I made it as far as Athens, TN before my bottom became too sore to fly, so I landed there and got gas. I also answered questions as to what I was flying. There were several Swifts based there. It's a fast traffic pattern. The temperature was finally up to 30 F at altitude.

I headed on toward Chattanooga around the mountain, skirted west of Atlanta TCA and stopped at LaGrange, GA. By this time I was really stiff and sore from the flight. I spent one and a half hours on the ground. People were great and I got a \$.30 / gal. Sun N Fun discount on fuel. Guess what? The OAT is up to 45F.

From LaGrange I took up a SE heading to intercept I-75 at Cordele, GA, then it was south to Cook Cty. for fuel. At this point I decided if I tried for Lakeland, it would be close to sunset when I got there. I selected Ocala, FL as a RON. It couldn't have been a better choice. The people at Hawthorn Aviation were great! An RV-4 landed at the same time with the same intentions I had. Hawthorne graciously put both airplanes in the hanger and drove us to a motel. They told us to call when ready in the morning for a pick-up. We had a good meal and rest.

The next morning we were back into the air and onto Sun N Fun with less than an hour to go. The traffic at this time of the morning was nil. I landed and tied down. I was the first of eight Sonerai's to show up. The temperature was now 75 F and I was finally able to put my insulated coveralls away.

Homeward Bound

I started watching the weather Wednesday. The long range forecast looked good so I waited until Friday to leave. The weather on Friday looked good up to Knoxville and then I would have to wait for a cold front to move through to the southeast. I was looking forward to touring Knoxville while I waited.

I left Sun N Fun about 8:00 AM and headed for Cook Cty. airport, just north of Valdosta, GA. Two hours later I was fueled up and headed for LaGrange. Another uneventful flight in good weather. I was starting to like cross country flying in the Sonerai. I filled the tank and took advantage of the \$.30 discount. Upon preflight I found some abrasion on the prop from the Florida sand. On closer inspection some of the finish wax was standing on end just below the urethane leading edge. I dressed that with my pocket knife and thoroughly inspected the urethane to make sure it was secure. All was well so I headed North around the west side of the Atlanta TCA. Don't put the newsletter down now -- this is where it gets exciting!

By this time in the flight I had supreme confidence in my trusty Sonerai. About 20 miles north of Carrollton, my peaceful flight was shattered by a fast, loud vibration. It took me about 2 seconds to wake up and pull the throttle to idle and another 2 seconds to kill the switches. I thought I broke a crank.

Now, let me clear up a couple of VW myths right now. When the tip breaks off your little bitty VW prop, it does not rip the engine from your plane. And VW engines with wood props do windmill.

After shutting down, I had to bring the nose up and slow to below 60 mph to get the prop to stop. It stopped and I immediately lowered the nose and it turned 4 or 5 more revolutions before it stopped again.

I spotted a big field and headed for it. I was at least 3000 ft. AGL so I had plenty of time. As I got lower the field appeared to have hills and dales so I looked for another. I spotted one that was on a hill and about 1000 ft across in all directions. It had houses and power lines but it looked like I could make it. As I established a circular downwind, I spotted a long mowed strip down through a bottom field.

The field was surrounded by woods and no houses or roads. I thought it might be someone's private strip, but the mowed strip was narrow. I was bit apprehensive to land there because there was no civilization and if I flipped

over, no one would find me. But the field was just so long I had to go for it. As I headed down over the trees, I started to slip but there was a lot of turbulence. The field was long so I just let it roll. I flared about half way down the strip. It was so narrow I lost sight of the mowed grass and could only see the high fox grass on both sides. I landed about 3 feet high and dropped in with one wheel in the tall grass. Full right rudder kept it straight and I rolled to a stop in about 150 feet.

I crawled out to inspect for damage. That's when I found that the prop had broken and I had a small bend in the left gear leg. Other than that all was well.

As I looked around trying to figure a way to civilization, I spotted a tractor trail going up over the hill. I headed up it. About 300 yards later I was standing in Lou and Goldie's yard. Lou was mowing and had just turned away from me as I came into view. As I stood waiting for his return, I started to worry. Is he going to call the Sheriff, maybe get his gun and shoot me, or worse, impound my Sonerai.

As Lou returned, he looked up and saw me. He kept giving me looks like "who the hell are you and where did you come from?" My apprehension grew as he pulled up and got off his tractor. I walked up, introduced myself and told him of my misfortune.

Well let me tell you that Lou thought this was the most exciting thing that had happened around there in a while. He told me to come on in the house so he could tell his wife. He left me downstairs and went up to tell Goldie. I could hear him trying to convince her of his story. She didn't believe him until he brought her down to see me.

We talked for a while trying to decide what to do about my dilemma. I asked about renting a truck and was informed that I was in the middle of nowhere. There were no services like that available.

Lou and I decided to take the tractor down to the field and tow the Sonerai up to the yard. He asked Goldie to fix a pot of coffee for when we got back. Off we went on the tractor. We hooked the tailwheel on the back and towed the plane up to the house. He

stopped in the yard and said I could tie it down anywhere I wanted. I could leave it as long as I wanted. Talk about Southern Hospitality!!

After I tied the Sonerai down, we went back in for coffee. When we got inside, Goldie hadn't made coffee. Lou asked why? Goldie said that maybe I needed something stronger than coffee. Lou said "how do you know he drinks?" But I agreed with Goldie so she fixed us their usual afternoon cocktail -- a brandy stinger. Now I don't drink that much so when she brought in a water glass, I knew I was in trouble. We sat and sipped and chatted. I sipped until I was partly tipsy. I sure was glad when Lou said he didn't think he could finish his drink. He got up and fixed us some coffee.

We focused our attention on my problem. Lou is in his early 80's. He doesn't see well enough to drive and Goldie only drives locally. So we decided to wait until their daughter arrived home from work and see if she could help.

In the meantime, a gentleman from the State Dept. of Health stopped by to do a water test on their well. Lou talked to him and found he was headed back to Atlanta after a couple more calls. He said he would be glad to stop back, pick me up and give me a ride into Atlanta airport. That's just what he did and two hours later I was on a 727 headed for Ohio.

My wife was a little stumped when I called from Columbus, OH to ask her to come pick me up. But that's another story.

I certainly hope other Sonerai trips are less exciting than this one. We'll see.

So that's Keith's story for Sun N Fun. Most of the time the trips to Florida have a better ending than his. If you haven't made the trek down South or to Oshkosh with your Sonerai, maybe you can work it into next year's schedule. But for now, it's Nov 22 and I have to contemplate my last flight for the year. I usually try to fly N 78ES on it's anniversary (Nov 25th) before putting it away for the winter and the weather isn't looking to make it all that easy this year. We'll see how it goes.

Sonerai News

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See you this winter?

