

The WingNut

EAA Chapter One Flabob Airport (RIR) Riverside, CA



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We make flying FUN!

January/February 2012

Unusual, unique, and fun to fly: The Ercoupe



Photo by Bonnie Kratz

An airplane that has developed an almost cult-like following over the past half century is the unique little Ercoupe. It was, and is, an unusual airplane...in the way it was designed, developed, marketed, and flown.

Those that love 'em really love 'em. Some pilots hate them. Some view them with curious humor. But one thing all have to agree on is that the airplane is unique.

The first thing aviators think of when they think of an Ercoupe is “rudderless.” The two-place, twin-tailed little bird was designed to be stall-proof and spin-proof and flown without rudder pedals. The ailerons are linked to the rudders, so the airplane is always in coordinated flight. As Ercoupe owner Ed Burkhead describes it, “When a coupe stalls, the wing ends up just mushing, but with the ailerons still in control of the plane. It's designed so that a partial stall starts at the wing root and fans out in a 'V' pattern. The outer 2/3rds or 3/4ths of the wing are still flying cleanly--*but* the root stall upsets the airflow over the elevator, limiting the elevator's down push. Combined with a somewhat limited elevator up travel (on some models), a Coupe's tail can't be pushed down enough to stall or keep stalled the majority of the wing on any Coupe. Whether it's in coordination from linked ailerons

and rudders or cross controlled by a rudder pedal kit, the Coupe can't be held in a spin. (If you fly over gross/out of rear CG, all bets are off.)”

The plane was designed by aeronautical engineer Fred Weick, assistant chief of the aeronautics division of the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA—the fore-runner to NASA). In 1934, he asked permission to build an aircraft based on the 1931 Stout Skycar, using fabric instead of aluminum covering, and control modifications based on NACA research. Weick and a group of co-workers designed and assembled the experimental aircraft with a group of his colleagues who worked on the project in their spare time and paid for it themselves. The resulting aircraft, known as the W-1, featured tricycle landing gear, a parasol wing, and a pusher propeller configuration.

Weick left NACA in 1936 and joined ERCO's fledgling aircraft team as chief designer, primarily to continue improving his aircraft design. Focusing his efforts on a number of design issues, primarily simplicity and safety, Weick strove to create a reasonably priced aircraft that would not stall or spin. Retaining the tricycle gear for ease of maneuvering on the ground and limited stall-spin fea-

(Continued on Page 4)

Happy New Year!

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Chapter Meetings

Jan 14th
Feb 11th

Calendar



January 2012

6th – First Friday Flicks
Chapter One Hangar - 5 p.m.

14th – Young Eagles
Chapter One Hangar - 8 a.m.

14th – Chapter Meeting
Chapter One Hangar - 1 p.m.

14th – Board Meeting
Chapter One Hangar - 3 p.m.

21st – Aircraft Display Day & Car Show
Flabob Airport

February 2012

3rd – First Friday Flicks
Chapter One Hangar - 5 p.m.

11th – Young Eagles
Chapter One Hangar - 8 a.m.

11th – Chapter Meeting
Chapter One Hangar - 1 p.m.

11th – Board Meeting
Chapter One Hangar - 3 p.m.

18th – Aircraft Display Day & Car Show
Flabob Airport

25th – Brawley Airport Young Eagles
Brawley Airport

March 2012

2nd – First Friday Flicks
Chapter One Hangar - 5 p.m.

10th – Young Eagles
Chapter One Hangar - 8 a.m.

10th – Chapter Meeting
Chapter One Hangar - 1 p.m.

10th – Board Meeting
Chapter One Hangar - 3 p.m.

17th – Aircraft Display Day & Car Show
Flabob Airport

31st – “Airshow 2012”
Riverside Airport



Finally... a music CD for aviators

It may become your favorite music CD, as it has quickly become mine. As soon as I unwrapped the CD *Song Pilot* this Christmas, I was hooked. The album cover features a beautiful picture of the artist,

Dwayne O'Brien, aloft in his Pitts S-2.

A quick read of the playlist, and I was really hooked. Songs like "Something in the Air," "High Flight," "Unusual Attitude," "Biplane," "Low and Slow," and "People, Places, and Planes" reveal that this is, indeed, an album devoted to aviation. Also included on the CD is the rising star song "We Remember," that was featured in the opening ceremonies at the ICAS last year and was played during the Heritage Flights at numerous airshows throughout the country (see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RU1oB8sGyYM>).

After listening to the CD, I had a new favorite album. The country pop songs are well written, well produced, with rich instrumentals and pleasing harmonies, and O'Brien's voice is smooth and soothing and sometimes sounds very similar to another great, but departed, pilot...John Denver.

One of the highlights of the album is "High Flight." O'Brien composed a beautiful melody which really complements the classic aviation poem penned in August 1941 by John Gillespie Magee, Jr. ("Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth and danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings..."). His song "Biplane" will take many of us back to our early years: "It was early fall, and I wasn't three feet tall, showing my Daddy that I could name all of the planes in the pattern. It was our Sunday thing; head out to the airport and dream. Just to be around flying machines was all that mattered."

Dwayne O'Brien was one of the founding members of the country music group Little Texas that churned out numerous top hits during the 1990s, with their albums earning gold, platinum and double platinum status. Their signature song was "God Blessed Texas." Dwayne had earned his college degree in premed, but fame and success as a musician changed his career course. But it never changed his passion for aviation. *Song Pilot* is his tribute to the indescribable passion so many of us have for aviation.

In his album liner notes, O'Brien writes: "But there are those of us to whom an airplane is more than a machine, and flight more than air travel. To us, the airplane is our instrument, and flight is the song of our souls.

"All of my life has been an interplay between my two passions: music and flying; each feeding and fueling the other. As a songwriter, I've known the thrill of performing hits in front of thousands. As a pilot, I've known the peaceful solitude of aerial dances in the sight of God alone, worshipping in a cathedral of His own making."

No matter what your taste in music, I believe you will embrace this album. Listen to the words, the stories, the poetry. This artist is truly one of "us." He loves airplanes and he loves flying. And he has expressed this love in the manner in which he is gifted.

It's music for the aviator's soul, and it's an album every pilot should own. The only problem is, it's out of print. The good news is, Dwayne said another run of the CD is being made right now, and they will soon be available. Keep reading your aviation publications (including *The WingNut*) for details.

The tale of the 'Coupe (Continued from Page 1)

tures, Weick switched to a low-wing monoplane configuration in his new model, powered by an engine in tractor configuration.

The ERCO 310, which included a fully cowled engine, made its first flight in October 1937 and was soon renamed the "Ercoupe." The easy-to-fly design included unique design features, including a large glazed canopy for improved visibility. The prototype 310 featured an ERCO-made inverted four-cylinder engine, which was quickly dropped due to its high manufacturing cost compared to the new Continental A-65 horizontal. Lacking

rudder pedals, the Ercoupe was flown using only the control wheel. A two-control system linked the rudder and aileron systems, which controlled yaw and roll, with the steerable nose wheel. The control wheel controlled the pitch and the steering of the aircraft, both on the ground and in the air, simplifying control and coordinated turning and eliminating the need for rudder pedals. A completely new category of pilot's license was created by the CAA for Ercoupe pilots who had never used a rudder pedal. Construction of the production prototype was completed in 1939 and certification by the CAA was completed in 1940 as "characteristically incapable of spinning." The first Ercoupe, serial no. 1, was owned by George Brinckerhoff and flown at College Park Airport (Maryland), and now belongs to the National Air and Space Museum.

The two-seat ERCO Ercoupe 415 went on sale in 1940. LIFE magazine described the aircraft as "nearly foolproof" and showed



The Rocket Assisted Take Off of an Ercoupe at March AFB in August 1941.

pictures of a pilot landing with his hands in the air. Only 112 units were delivered before World War II intervened, halting all civil aircraft production.

Production of the model 415-C resumed in 1946, and in that year alone 4,311 aircraft were produced and sold at a cost of \$2,665. At its peak, ERCO was turning out 34 Ercoupes per day, operating three shifts per day. The aircraft was aggressively marketed through non-conventional outlets such as the men's department of the Macy's department store chain.

However, private aircraft sales slumped after the war and the bottom dropped out of the civil aircraft market in late 1946, ending prospects for a boom market for civil aircraft sales. In 1947 ERCO sold its remaining Ercoupe inventory to Sanders Aviation, which continued to produce the aircraft in the same ERCO-owned factory. A total of 213 aircraft were sold by 1950. During this time, ERCO's chief engineer Fred Wieck moved on to Texas A&M, where he developed the agricultural Piper Pawnee aircraft and eventually the popular Piper Cherokee with John Thorpe.

Univair Aircraft Corporation of Aurora, Colorado, purchased the Ercoupe design from the Engineering and Research Company in 1950. They provided spare parts and customer support to the existing aircraft.

In April 1955, Univair sold the Ercoupe type certificate to the *Forney Aircraft Company* of Fort Collins, CO, which later became the *Fornaire Aircraft Company*. The aircraft they produced differed from the 415-G in its engine/propeller combination, revised engine cowling, larger baggage compartment, and aluminum-covered wing panels. Production began in 1958 and ended in 1959. They produced a total of 138 aircraft.

Between August 1960 and March 1964, the rights to the AirCoupe aircraft were held by the AirCoupe division of *Air Products Company* of Carlsbad, NM. The company was started by the city, with the hope of establishing aircraft manufacture as a local industry. They purchased the type certificate from Forney when a potential deal with Beechcraft fell through. Twenty-five of the F-1A Forney Trainers were produced before the type certificate was sold to *Alon, Incorporated* on March 16, 1964.

The tale of the 'Coupe

(Continued from Page 4)

Alon Inc. was founded by John Allen and Lee O. Higdon, two executives who had retired from aircraft manufacturer Beechcraft to found their own company. They had previously negotiated with Forney Aircraft to purchase production of the Aircoupe so that Beechcraft could use the design as an introductory trainer. The deal was canceled by Olive Ann Beech, who decided to concentrate resources on Beech's Musketeer. This decision caused the executives to leave Beechcraft and establish operations in McPherson, KS, where they purchased the type certificate for the Aircoupe from the City of Carlsbad.



The W-1, Fred Weick's pet project at NACA, was the fore-runner of the venerable Ercoupe.

The Alon A-2 and A-2A Aircoupes featured a sliding canopy, a more powerful Continental C-90 engine, separate bucket seats and an improved instrument panel. The A-2 also differs from earlier two-control models in having limited-movement rudder pedals. This was done in order to make it a more acceptable training aircraft and to make it easier to counteract increased P-factor yaw during a climb from the more powerful engine. Nosewheel steering was no longer interlinked with the control yoke, and was changed to the more common practice of being interlinked with the rudder pedals. The single control (non-differential) wheel brakes remained. The airplane had a higher rate of climb, a higher speed for best climb rate, and better engine cooling. Its non-spinning character

remained unchanged.

Alon produced 245 A-2s from 1964 to 1967, with peak production of 137 in 1966. The last 25 A-2s produced by Alon had spring steel landing gear in place of the original main gear struts, light alloy castings and trailing links. Production of the A-2 ceased in September 1967, and on October 9, 1967, Alon was purchased by, and became a division of the Mooney Aircraft Company of Kerrville, TX.

Mooney began producing the aircraft in 1968 as the Mooney A2-A and called it the Cadet. A total of 59 of these were produced and sold. In 1968 Mooney redesigned the tail section, doing away with the twin rudders and replacing them with the distinctive Mooney vertical stabilizer and rudder, and 59 were produced as the Mooney M10.

The type certificate was sold to Univair Aircraft Corporation in October, 1974 and remains with Univair. The company has not produced any new aircraft but continues to produce replacement parts and provide technical assistance to Ercoupe owners.

Unique facts about the 'Coupe:

- The first successful United States rocket-assisted takeoff was accomplished in an Ercoupe at March Field by Lt. Homer A. Boushey (Army Air Force), with pressed-powder propellant Rocket Assisted Take Off (RATO) rockets developed by Cal Tech. On August 12, 1941, California researchers attached six rockets to the wings of an Ercoupe. The pilot, no doubt a brave one, ignited a blend of perchlorate, asphalt, and special oils with an instrument panel switch. In a blinding flash of light and dense smoke, Lt. Boushey launched himself in only 300 feet and 7.5 seconds instead of the Ercoupe's usual 581 feet and 13.1 seconds!
- All original Boeing 707 pilots were taught to land in the Ercoupe. The 707 had a similar problem--the low hanging engines meant that you couldn't drop a wing into a crosswind--you had to land them crabbed!!
- Early Ercoupes were hung as displays (and sold) in the men's department at Macy's!
- The first U.S. pilot without arms, Jessica Cox, is able to fly because of the rudderless Ercoupe.
- Flabob's flight training school, Rogers Aviation, has an Ercoupe for rent!



From the Editor's Desk

On curing the blues

Some days, I feel like I'm becoming a true misomaniac...someone who hates everything. In a genuine curmudgeonly mood, I get up in the morning and watch and read the news. I hate the news. I hate the media news vultures, and don't really trust a word they say. You've heard them tell out-right fables about airplanes in aviation-related stories, right? So why should you trust them when they report on such weighty topics as international finance and politics? Bah! Humbug!

I hate the commercials. The trend this year in advertising (as in network comedies and dramas) is to portray males as whiney, incompetent effete boobs who cower at the sight of a strong capable woman. While this may, indeed, accurately depict the state of the young modern U.S. male, I *hate* it!

With media-induced dyspepsia roiling in my gut, I go to my computer to download the day. Get my email. It rolls in on three different accounts, and I spend a half-hour sorting through it, only to find out that our country's beloved President is an illegal alien, some poor well-educated professor in a far off land needs help transferring \$6.5 million into my account so he can take out \$500 when he arrives in the States, and that my genitalia are diminutive (Who told them? I blame my ex. But, perhaps it was that girl I...never mind.). I *hate* spam!!

Another cup of coffee and it's time to pay bills. I hate paying bills! My son used my credit card to put gas in his scooter. \$10 and something. The due date has passed. There's a \$39 late fee. So...\$49 and change for three gallons of gas. Aaargh! I *hate* paying bills!

Bills paid, coffee gone, I head for the Norco Post Office to send a shipment to Canada. It weighs eight pounds, so I'm not sure which export document I need. I go to the post office with feelings of dread. This establishment is known far and wide for its miraculous inefficiency. It takes talent—lots of talent—to be as consistently inefficient as the Norco Post Office. They have a perverse talent for handling a large customer load: The more people there are in line...the fewer windows will be open. Three people in line—three windows open. 29 people in line—one window open. And then at least one customer will have a problem that requires the one busy employee to be gone from the window for at least 10 minutes (Where do they go?). Being the sagacious customer I am, I took a paperback book in with me, along with my checkbook and package. Took a number (about 20 ahead of me). Some 50 pages later, I march back to my car, muttering obscenities under my breath. I *hate* the post office!

Maybe some McDonald's coffee will lift my spirits! So I sprint off to the local McD's to go through the drive-through. Only two cars ahead of me. Great! The first car completes its order and drives around. The car ahead of me stops at the order-mic and sits there. And sits there. And sits there. How long can it take to order an Egg McMuffin meal? Minutes have gone by. C'mon! OK. Maybe the driver ahead of me has abulia—the lack of ability to act or to make decisions. They asked him, “Coffee or orange juice?” and he froze! Finally, the car moves forward, and I get to order. A few minutes later, I'm sipping McD's coffee, being careful not to pour it on my diminutive genitalia (not that I couldn't use the money). I *hate* drive-throughs.

Shitake! (or something to that effect). I've hated everything about this day, so far. I think maybe I'll drive the 20 or so miles to Flabob Airport to see what's going on there. I get on the I-15 freeway at 6th Street in Norco and head north. Traffic flow is great! I travel in the slow lane at speeds well above the 65 mph speed limit for about a mile. Then nothing but brake lights ahead. Traffic slows to 50...40...20...and we come to a stop. A crawl. A stop. A crawl. A stop. A crawl. Finally, we pass the cause of the congestion...some poor motorist has a flat tire and is changing it along the berm. After that, traffic takes off to supersonic speeds. Aargh! I *hate* the freeways!

So I fly up the 15, take the 60 East and get off at the Rubidoux Exit. I'm in Flabob territory! Only a mile or so to go! I get behind a car cruising along about 20 mph. I look to change lanes, but there's a line of vehicles coming in the other lane at break-neck speeds. Can't do it. I'm stuck behind Mr. Cool and his low-rider slow-mobile. I *hate* this traffic!

I finally come to the Mission Boulevard traffic light. Have you ever sat through a longer traffic light? I *hate* this traffic light! I could read another 50 pages of my paperback waiting for the light to change to green. But it does, and I buzz down Mission Boulevard to Twining Street, turn right, and soon enter the gates of Flabob Airport!

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The votes are in; here are your officers for 2010

The votes are in for your EAA Chapter One Board of Directors for 2012. For this year:

Jan Buttermore is our new Vice President.

Nancy Acorn is returning as our Treasurer.

Dave Cudney is returning to the Chapter's Board of Directors.

Road Headlee and **Walt Wasowski** are also returning as Directors.

We welcome new and returning officer and Board Directors. Thank you for voting.

Jerry Cortez, President

LSA Display Day at Chino

LSA Aircraft Display Day will be held at Chino Airport on Saturday, Feb. 11 from 1 to 4 p.m. Come see the latest available factory and home-built Light Sport Aircraft, take an up-close look and talk to the owners and pilots about the flight characteristics, options, costs, build time, etc. Schedule future demo flights with distributors and sales reps.

The aircraft will be on static display at the EAA Chapter 92 Builder Center hangar, right next to the Flo's parking lot at Chino Airport. In case of rain, the event will be held on the following Saturday, Feb. 18.

Confirmed aircraft on display will be: Arion Lightning LS-1, Cessna 162 SkyCatcher, Flight Designs CT, Legend Cub, Remos GX, SportCruiser, Technam (model TBD), and Vans RV-12.

From the Editor's Desk *(Continued from Page 6)*

You have to know the history of this airport to appreciate what passing through those open gates means. It means you've left Rubidoux. You've left Riverside County. You've left the 21st Century and entered into a sacred patch of aviation history that is unequalled anywhere in the world. Here is where Ray Stits designed and built his 15 different aircraft designs. Here is where he developed and sold Stits Polyfiber. Here is where Lou Stolp's Starduster was based, where Art Scholl perfected his retractable Chipmunk, where the game-changing Stephens Akro took shape, where Frank Tallman and Margaret Ritchie flew from, where the world's smallest airplane and the first solar powered plane first flew, where the first EAA chapter was formed. As an aviator, you're on holy ground.

I drive around, through the hangars, out to the ramp. There sits the rental fleet of our flight school, Rogers Aviation. Where else can you find a Ercoupe on the flight line of the local flight school? And there's the Flabob Express, displaying the stately beauty that only a DC-3 can project. Aerocrafters is buzzing with people, as usual. Far West Aviation has planes parked everywhere. Young people are milling about at the Wathen Aviation High School. It's calm...the windsock is as limp as my diminu...er, never mind. I watch as a visiting Piper Comanche taxis out and takes off toward the sinking sun. It's beautiful. It's peaceful. It's life without the complications of the mixed-up world out *there*.

My misomania has been cured. How can you hate when surrounded by the beauty of aviation...past and present? Somehow, all is right with the world. I smile. I think I'll drive over to Ray's hangar and see what he's up to. It's a beautiful day to be alive!

LG

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Fabulous Flying Flicks start the new year on Friday

2012's fabulous flying flicks kicks off with a tale of a fighting Scout squadron in the Great War: *The Eagle and the Hawk* (1933), starring Frederick March, Jack Oakie, Cary Grant and Carol Lombard. Tag Line: They dedicated their lives...to DEATH!

Written by the respected John Monk Saunders, author of a dozen or more of the great classic flying films – and husband of Fay Wray, King Kong's best girl – this got good reviews as not being just the usual bundle of clichés and stereotypes. Said the *New York Times*: "In *The Eagle and the Hawk*", at the Paramount, John Monk Saunders has written a vivid and impressive account of the effect of battles in the clouds upon an American ace. It is, fortunately, devoid of the stereotyped ideas which have weakened most of such narratives. Here is a drama told with the praiseworthy sense of realism, and the leading role is portrayed very efficiently by Fredric March.

The Adventures of "Sky King" start the evening.

Lyon Air Museum to host Jaguar 'Cars & Cockpits'

Lyon Air Museum, a premier Southern California showcase for vintage military aircraft and automobiles, will host dozens of classic Jaguar vintage sports cars as part of a "Cars & Cockpits" event scheduled for Sun., Jan. 8, 2012, from 10-11:30 a.m. at the facility, located on the west side of the runway at John Wayne Airport in Orange County. (NOTE: Weather permitting).

The cars will be driven by members of the Jaguar Owners Club of Los Angeles. Love for the Jaguar automobile is the common bond that brought together a group of enthusiastic Jaguar owners in 1955 to form the Jaguar Owners Association International. The next year the name was changed to the Jaguar Owners Club (JOC). The club was incorporated in 1957 and became affiliated with Jaguar Clubs of North America. The JOC has approximately 400 members.

Viewing the automobiles in the Museum parking lot is free of charge. Regular Museum admission prices will be in effect.

The 30,000-sq.ft. Lyon Air Museum opened in Dec. 2009. The Museum has on exhibit some of the world's rarest operational aircraft and vehicles. Included among a variety of military vehicles and motorcycles on display are an original 1939 Mercedes-Benz Model G4 Offener Touring Wagon used by Adolph Hitler in Germany and Poland until it was seized by the French Army at the war's end, a 1941 Cadillac Series 62 Convertible Sedan (the last four-door convertible produced by Cadillac) formerly owned by New York socialite Princess Diane Eristavi, and a 1947 Lincoln Continental Cabriolet featuring a long front "bonnet" that gracefully conceals a potent V12 engine.

Lyon Air Museum is located at 19300 Ike Jones Road, Santa Ana, CA 92707. P: 714/210-4585. F: 714/210-4588. Email: info@lyonairmuseum.org. Web: www.lyonairmuseum.org.



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EAA Chapter One

Happy New Year!!

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The Building
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Chicken 'n fixins will be provided. Please bring salads, side dishes and desserts!

Chapter Meeting
January 14th, February 11th
at noon

Be There or Be Square!

Join us at the Chapter One Hangar for a day of fellowship & fun!!

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL:

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Check our website at www.eeach1.org

We Make Flying FUN!!

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