

April, 1976

Dear Sonerai Planholder!

It has only been a year since you heard from us last. And what a YEAR!! As I said last March, we were looking for more space for the business. Well, John took a big plunge. He took a leave from school this past year and built a 5000 sq. ft. metal building!! He moved in around Thanksgiving and has been working day and night ever since. The decision to do this full time and go ahead with developing Monnett Experimental Aircraft was a big one for us. But things are going well and John is - as usual when he's working with airplanes - happy as he could be. He has resigned his position as a teacher and will forge ahead this next year at 955 GRACE. (our new address)

Hours at the building are 9 to 5 Mon. - Sat. and Tues. and Thurs. evenings 7 to 10. You are more than welcome to come and visit and look around. There is always alot going on. Of course, if you need anything for your airplane we would welcome that too!! This, our latest catalog, has quite a few new products so bring along your friends and fellow E.A.A.'ers. As you will note, we no longer carry just Sonerai parts but general aviation supplies. I put down our hours with tongue in cheek because John has been at The Building 7 days and 7 nights a week since he "moved in"! The reason he's there constantly is - what else - airplanes!!

He is trying to get the Sonerai I back in the air this Spring. He had a little accident here last summer. It made the front page of the Elgin paper one Sunday morning with red lines around it no less!! "Plane Crashes near Golf Course"! A nice letter to the editor followed later from some unknown supporter of aviation stating that this should not be called a "Crash" but the pilot commended for landing safely after running out of gas. Yes, that is what he did! He had been working a day Sat. on the engine as he was to fly to a Fly-In early the next morning. It was getting near dark and he wanted to test fly it. So he took a quick check - (he had changed the tanks the year before and never re-marked the fuel guage) - near empty but enough to fly around a little. He flew over our house and the engine quit!! He radioed MayDay and looked for a place to land. The Sonerai surprised him with its glide. He was able to go much further than he first thought. He landed finally on a road near a golf course. Landed home free, heaved a sigh of relief, and hit a Sign with the tip of a wing. The canopy burst and the plane was whipped around. There was damage to the fuselage and both wings. John was glad he was in a tubular structure - came out without a single scratch. Just a wee bit shaken!! It was too near Oshkosh to repair and he was so busy with other things that he just rolled it in the hanger and there it sat. It was sad to see it sitting there - not going to Oshkosh. This was to be the first one missed since it first appeared in 1971. However - It was not to be left out entirely. For this was the engine that was used for the VariEz Record Flight at Oshkosh. What in itself is another story which I shall elaborate on some other time! It was very coincidental that we should have a proven run-in engine just sitting here. John and Mike Core worked very hard to get it in and running. It was wild and exciting to see it all unfold. We have the engine back now with 100 more hours on it. Hohn is about ready to install it once again in the Sonerai I.

The Sonerai II 3 with the fiberglass shell is being worked on once again. It was sitting at Oshkosh '75 looking like it wanted to fly. This year it will! John is still as excited about it as he has always been but somehow it is the one plane he's built and hasn't flown within the year he started it. Lots of reasons why - mainly time - the business and the building came first this year.

Also an exciting development in the Sonerai II is a low-wing version of the design. It will be a very interesting comparison of a mid-wing and a low-wing airplane and their performance. More on this later! Yet another project in the mock-up stage is a small powered sailplane. Watch for this at Oshkosh '76!

The standard II now has about 400 hours on it. It was towed to Fla. this Jan. for the Lakeland Fly-In. That was a fun Fly-In with so many things to see in that area and such balmy weather for us Yankees in the middle of the Jan. blahs!

John actually took us all to Fla.: our son John at 5, the twins Jason and Jeremy at almost 2 and me! Greg came along with us and Vance Graeber flew down in his Sonerai I (much to the envy of John and Greg)! John's sister and her six girls drove a station wagon behind our van towing the airplane. Quite a caravan we made. The C.B.ers had a hey day with the "Green Flyer" (our handle). We had all sorts of comments.

Guess the family will go to a few Fly-Ins this year. The twins are at a great age! We love 2 year olds.- Crazy eh! But they are so enthusiastic and eager and entertaining and are happy doing anything and everything!! (At this point, I'd say anything is better than 2 tiny babies to care for) Our John has survived his brothers very well so far and delights us with his conversations and 5 year old outlook on things.

Back to airplanes - There are about two dozen Sonerai's flying now. If you have any pictures or news about ~~your~~ Sonerai be sure and send it to us. Greg has worked very hard getting together some photo albums to put on display. Also if you have a change of address or sell your plans or plane, please let us know. It is a great help to us. By us I mean Char Graeber our "Ace" sec. who handles your orders and keeps things moving during the day. And me. Now that the business is out of the basement I no longer feel like I have to run things but..... I still keep in touch with what's happening by working for John two nights a week.

NOTES FROM JOHN:

Alternator system - you might want to take notice of the new alternator system that we have now. The provisions for it are now standard with all our conversions. All you have to do is add the alternator at any time you wish.

EV Hub - Also new is the Econo-Vee Prop Hub Unit. John is very enthusiastic about this. We have a new II cowl for it. It is going on the Sonerai II B with the fiberglass shell. Because of all the machining on the standard hub it is becoming more and more expensive to produce and thus to sell. So this E V Hub is less expensive, lighter, and easier to install!! However, for heavy aerobatics and Formula Vee racing, the standard Super Vee Hub is still the one to get.

You might want to look over all the Engine Conversion options available now. Our complete systems mean just that - complete- all the systems necessary to convert the VW Engine for use are there.

Cowlings - The new II place cowl eliminates the need for the front canopy bow. The cowl should be fitted before the canopy frame is made and then the frame should be made to fit the cowl.

Hardware Pkg. - We now have a hardware pkg. available for the II. We have revised the list that you have in the plans to reflect M S cable fittings and some other minor fittings. It does not include engine bolts. John feels the best way to get your hardware is to make your assemblies and measure the bolts. Then write us for your needs.

Fiberglass Parts - We are sorry for the delay in fiberglass parts. There are only so many that can be turned out of the molds, and we are very sorry for the long delays. Please bare with us and be sure to order with enough lead time on these parts - cowls, wheel pants, etc. (60 days).

This flying season is almost upon us. We hope to get to as many Fly-Ins as possible this summer. Oshkosh will, of course, find us there with our airplanes, and a booth or two. We will be sponsoring a Sonerai II for an industrial arts workshop at Stout University this year. It is a three week workshop under the direction of a very experienced instructor, Bill Ghan. They hope to fly the plane to Oshkosh '76. Remember they already built one in two weeks at the workshop two years ago.

I am sorry for the long delay between newsletters. Hopefully, you will be hearing from us more often on a regular basis. We will try to keep you informed on all the latest developments and products. And remember to stop by if you are in the area - We think The Building, as we call it, is really great!!

Til next time -

The Green Flyer's Co-pilot

Note: Another new product - the high quality Tach. Betty Monnett

May 1 & 2 a two day Sonerai Builder's Workshop sponsored by Stout State University will be held here at the building. There will be a tuition charge and you can receive credit or a certificate of attendance. You will be receiving a letter on this from Stout very soon.