

43 years of providing Cessna owners/pilots the most comprehensive technical information available

CESSNA *PILOTS* MAGAZINE

July 2026 | www.cessna.org



Under the Wing At Oshkosh

James and Kyle Kingsborough

p24



CONTENTS

July 2026 | Volume 43 | Number 7

- 6 **Flying Below the Corn**
Mike Jones
- 14 **Italian Speed**
David Bunin
- 22 **VOR: MIA**
Don Boccaccio
- 24 **ON THE COVER**
Under the Wing At Oshkosh
Three Generations, One Cessna 210, and a Stormy Arrival
at Aviation's Greatest Campground
James D. & Kyle J. Kingsborough
- 30 **Sharper Together:**
A Reader's Take on Aim Small, Miss Small
Cole Melby
- 34 **Changing of the Guardians!**
Jim Cavanagh
- 3 Member Discounts
- 4 CPA Courses
- 42 Aviation News
- 45 Advertiser's Index
- 46 Cessna Marketplace



Member Discounts

The following advertisers provide special discounts to Cessna Pilots Association members.

Air Research:

www.wingxstol.com

Dynamic Propeller:

10% discount STC kits

www.dynamicpropeller.com

Eagle Fuel Cells:

Free installation kit or

free ground shipping

www.eaglefuelcells.com

Stene Aviation:

10% Discount

www.steneaviation.com

Airplane Caretaker

10% Discount

www.airplanecaretaker.com

Tell these advertisers that you saw their ad in the

CESSNA*PILOTS*
Magazine



Burly Kevin Johnson flies a two-seat Aviomania G2SB he has christened "Sky Steed." More than 2,000 G2SBs have been sold, so it's a very popular and economical design. Johnson uses his custom-designed trailer, in the back, to move his gyro longer distances.



Mike Jones
PilotMike2012@gmail.com

FLYING BELOW THE CORN

The Unexpected Fun of Gyrocopters

Years ago, I was on the ramp with my flight instructor at tiny Robertson Field in Plainville, CT. Stuck in student-pilot hell, I was envious of the Real Pilots flying the Heavy Metal: elegant Bonanzas, speedy Mooneys, the occasional Pilatus, and the even more rarified Citation jets. "Someday," I said to my instructor, "I'm going to fly a real airplane."

He turned to me with the oddest expression; a mix of avuncular surprise and other-worldly dismay at my lack of understanding.

"Mike, it's not what you fly that makes you a pilot. It's that you fly at all," he quietly replied.



Steven Chadwell loves the freedom of flying his bare-bones, heavily modified single-seat gyro.

I was reminded of that wisdom when I visited a high-spirited group of pilots at a small fly-in. Pound-for-aircraft-pound, they were the most enthusiastic pilots I have ever met. And they were all flying gyrocopters.

Field of Dreams

Anson County, NC, is just about as poor as you can get this side of the Appalachians. With the successive collapses of the tobacco, furniture, and textile industries, Anson's 22,000 people have weathered decades of economic abuse. But somehow or another, the community has hung on to its airport. With its 5,000-foot runway and ramshackle hangars, Jeff Cloud Field is an aeronautical Field of Dreams, nestled into corn fields as far as the eye can see. Clustered around the ramp this particular Saturday were dozens and dozens of pilots and their gyrocopters.

Kevin Johnson of Beaufort, SC, has been flying his tandem-seat open-cockpit Aviomania G2SB for two years, with an enormous grin the whole time. The

long-legged, two-seat machine weighs a tad over six hundred pounds and has a useful load equally as large. With a 130-horsepower liquid-cooled Honda engine, it flies about 70 miles per hour burning five gallons an hour.

Johnson wears a professional-style jumpsuit because his heart is in the rotary world. "I fly fixed-wing, too, but I wanted to fly helicopters professionally. Got to be too expensive, and couldn't get nobody to pay me to fly helicopters," he lamented. "I can fly this for forty bucks an hour, including maintenance. For that kind of money, you can't buy any more fun."

Gyrocopters are generally tiny, weight-limited machines, and while Johnson theoretically can fly for more than two hours, the ergonomics are against him.

"That seat's very narrow and I weigh 275 pounds," he said, "So I limit flights to about an hour and a half in each direction. Farther than that, you bring the trailer."



Victor Maynard brought this two-seat semi-enclosed bird to the event and gave the author a thrilling 20-minute ride.

Trailers are endemic to the gyrocopter crowd; there were more trailers and pickups on the field than flying machines. “Driving is easier than flying,” Johnson explained. “Pop out one bolt, take off the blade, and push it into the trailer. It’s just easy, peasy.”

A Little Bit of Everything

Unlike the exuberant but beefy Johnson, Victor Maynard is a neat, lithe, and precise gentleman in his early fifties from Apex, NC. Maynard has accumulated 600 total hours in the sky and 220 of them were in gyros. Fascinated by flight all his life, he was just 14 when he discovered sailplanes, and then he migrated into powered gliders, hang gliders, trikes, and powered parachutes. He even admits, somewhat ruefully, to flying Cessnas.

Maynard’s bird of choice is a handsome blue semi-enclosed Autogyro MTOClassic. A two-place machine, it’s powered by a turbocharged Rotax producing 114 horsepower on an economical four gallons an hour. It cruises around 75 mph but climbs an eye-popping 1,200 feet per minute.

“I decided to try gyrocopters because of the wind capability,” he explained as he introduced me to his aircraft. “They have very, very high wing loading. That means we can fly in crazy 30-40 mph winds.”

While gyrocopters are easy to fly, they handle completely differently than fixed-wing aircraft, he advised me. He added that fixed-wing pilots need “a massive amount” of re-training before strapping themselves into a gyro.

That said, Maynard also suggested that gyros are far safer than traditional aircraft because the aircraft is always and automatically in “autorotation” mode.

“They can’t stall. And as long as the rotor is spinning, you’ve got lift,” he explained. “At the last minute, just pitch it to get a little bit of speed, and set it down,” his hands demonstrating the aircraft’s movements.

Those spinning rotor blades are very flexible, he pointed out, and need to be pre-rotated to at least 200 rpm to become sufficiently rigid to fly. “If [the rotor’s] not spinning fast



GyroTechnic is Denis Schoemaker's company that produces this beautifully crafted single-seat open-cockpit flyer. The quality of the engineering and the artistry involved in the assembly makes this one of the prettiest of the open-cockpit designs.

enough, the blades will flex, start flapping and hit the tail. You don't want to take off with the rotor blades too slow."

Open Cockpit Delights

Just as with traditional airplanes, some pilots like factory-finished aircraft while others like to build their own. Steven Chadwell, from LaFollette, TN, is in the latter camp. A retired U.S. Army Motor Sergeant, Chadwell lives and breathes cutting, bending, and welding metal. Chadwell's open-cockpit machine looks like a flying beach chair. The draggy bird cruises at about 55-60 mph. It has a four-cylinder, water-cooled, in-line Yamaha engine straight out of a snowmobile. "Everything on it has been replaced or modified since I bought it," Chadwell said with a giant grin.

Chadwell agrees with Maynard that gyros are fun in the sky but can get tricky near the ground. "The landings, flaring, and everything are about the same. But taking off? You gotta balance it on the main tires, and gently give it

the gas. If the blade is rotating enough it'll just levitate. Don't yank it back. Don't do anything. When it's ready to fly, it will fly."

I spoke for almost an hour with burly but eloquent Denis Schoemaker, the president of GyroTechnic, out of Mankato, MN. Schoemaker's company makes the VX1, an elegant open-cockpit single-seater so pretty I wanted to adopt it. The bright morning sunlight reflected from it like a polished suit of armor on a medieval knight. Even a novice like myself could see this was a machine that was thoughtfully engineered, carefully machined, and assembled precisely. At Oshkosh last year his bird won the grand champion Lindy award for gyroplanes. "I was pretty honored," he said. "That's proof of the quality of my engineering and craftsmanship."

Schoemaker made some interesting choices designing his machines. First, the VX1 is powered by a Simonini two-stroke 800CC engine from Italy, producing about 100 horsepower. Two-stroke engines have a reputation for be-



Maynard offered the author a ride in his plane, which was eagerly accepted. While the takeoff roll was longer than anticipated, the flight was thrilling. Maynard is a very safe and skilled pilot.

CUSTOM ENGINE OVERHAULS

NEAR CHICAGO



“A TOP RATED SHOP” – Aviation Consumer, March 2010
 Flat Rate Prop Strike Inspections and Repairs
 Dynamic Propeller Balancing While You Wait



FAA Repair Station YYBR664L / EASA.145.6472

800-397-8181 815-544-2300

www.poplargoaveairmotive.com e-mail: dallen@poplargoaveairmotive.com

11619 Rt. 76, Poplar Grove, IL 61065

ing fussy but Schoemaker says the risks are manageable.¹ He also avoids complex avionics. “Everyone over-instruments their gyros,” he complained to me. “Why? Airspeed really isn’t critical. Altitude? Typically I’m ten feet off the corn. I did a Garmin for one guy, but that’s overkill. You just gotta make sure your engine’s happy.”

Why We Fly

I asked all of these pilots about the puzzling allure of their machines: they’re slow, they can’t carry much, they’re not back-country flyers, and they’re terrible cross-country machines — why bother?

“If you just want low and slow, you got Champs, you got Cubs, you got homebuilts,” Chadwell answered. “But my gyro is open to the sky. You look down and see everything. The wind is on your chest. It’s like a motorcycle in the sky.”

Schoemaker just growled at my lack of enlightenment. “It’s

1. Two-stroke engines produce prodigious horsepower for their weight, but in aeronautical applications there are significant operational risks. Two-stroke engines are prone to incorrect fuel-to-oil mixing, which leads to catastrophic piston seizure. This can be minimized by “autolube systems” but they add another failure mode. Two-strokes are also more susceptible to carburetor icing and operate at higher RPMs than traditional engines, causing structural stresses on rigid components. You decide.

completely open and free, just like off-road motorcycling. I don't even pull my visor down. It's just like an ocean breeze hitting me in the face," he said. "These machines are the dirt bikes of the sky. They're like jet skis and golf carts. They're just for playing around the neighborhood."

"When you fly an airplane, you fly with the birds," Johnson agreed. "But when you fly a gyro you are the bird. It's your ass on the line and it's wonderful. There's nothing underneath you but God."

"You Are the Bird"

I had to give it a try. My almost-sainted wife strongly expressed her concerns that I might not return from a flight in an open-cockpit gyrocopter, but she grumpily conceded that a brief flight in Maynard's semi-enclosed two-seater might be survivable.

Given that half-hearted blessing, I was eager and Maynard was willing. He helped me get my helmet on properly and gave my four-point harness a rib-cracking yank to confirm it would hold me firmly in place. The engine started briskly and we carefully taxied out to the runway where a flock of other gyrocopters were already dancing through the pattern.

Hidden behind Maynard's seat and shoulders, I could neither see the engine gauges nor his control inputs, but overhead the rotor blades leisurely began to swing as he engaged the clutch. We sat on the runway for thirty seconds, perhaps more, until the blades developed their distinctive "whup, whup, whup" and blurred into a speeding, silvery disk, well past the 200-rpm danger zone. Maynard finally released the brakes and added power to the pusher-prop. Engine roaring and two props spinning, we gently sauntered down the centerline. Our take-off probably took a thousand feet or so. Backcountry STOL flying is not for gyrocopters.

But once we were up... it got exciting.

Our climb was unexpected and rapid, the ground disappearing like a moon rocket. The airflow buffeted my face and caught the underside of my helmet's visor, lifting my face skyward. It took concentrated muscle-power to tuck my chin. Meanwhile, my glasses — which always hang listlessly from my shirtfront — flapped crazily in the whirlwind. Unwilling to lose them, I dropped them inside my shirt and they rattled on my tummy for the duration.

In a flicker we were at pattern altitude. Maynard dashed to the north end of the field. There, nose-high, he turned into the gentle headwind and began to hover. For more than a minute we simply sat in the air, smooth as silk, completely unmoving.

A word about the term "semi-enclosed." On the ground, I felt safely ensconced within the carbon fiber hull of the aircraft. The seat felt commodious and sturdy. Hanging a thousand feet in the air was different. There was nothing between me and eternity. No floor, no plexiglass, no aluminum, no wings. Just the restless "whup whup" of that spinning rotor. I tightened my four-point harness and wished it was an eight-pointer.

Unaware of my terror, Maynard pushed the nose down and demonstrated the high-speed regime of his bird. We headed for the cornfields west of the runway. On the way he weaved over the hangars and zipped around a dusty, mud-red brick factory. He descended unconcernedly and I realized we were getting low. Really low. Scary low.

We arrived over a harvested field pock-marked with stubble from last year's corn. Maynard ducked over the tree line and snuggled down into the weeds, racing ten feet above the sun-dried stalks. From my skinny perch, I saw Maynard aim at a forested island in the middle of the field. We looped around those trees in a 45° bank. Looking down, to my left, was nothing but brown dirt. To my right was nothing but sky. He reversed course and looped around the other way. Despite the gymnastics, the rotors maintained their steady "whup whup whup" as the engine,

Alpha

aviation

SEE YOU AT
**EAA AIRVENTURE
OSHKOSH
2026**

Booth #3112 **1.800.653.5112**
cs@alphaaviation.com • 9am-5pm M-F CT

10% OFF YOUR ORDER
CODE: OSH26CP
Good July 29th to August 31st, 2026 • Not valid on clearance items or shipping

SHOULDER HARNESSES & LAP BELTS
REPLACEMENT, MINOR CHANGE, PMA, OEM, and STC
INERTIAL REEL and FIXED STRAP OPTIONS
2PT and 3PT RESTRAINTS

HYDRAULIC AIRCRAFT JACKS
OVER 12,000 SOLD WORLDWIDE!
EASY TO SHIP, EASY TO MOVE
3- and 8-TON CAPACITY
CLEARS GEAR DOORS
FROM 24" to 93"

www.ALPHA-AVIATION.com

inches behind my head, bellowed.

The flight was eerily smooth. Yes, we were yanking and banking, but it was very coordinated and comfortable. The G-forces kept me snugly in my seat. We zipped around the fields, popped over trees, and floated down the other side. I've had much rougher rides on the New Jersey Turnpike. This was like ice skating. Could flying gyrocopters become an Olympic sport?

True confessions: I laughed out loud. This experience was so unexpected, so fun, so elegant and unstressed, I could not contain the thrill. I doubt Maynard heard me but I am sure he was enjoying it as much as I, confident that his performance was gold medal caliber.

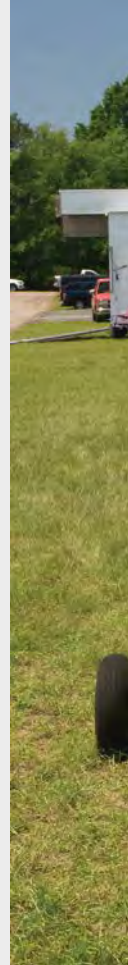
Maynard steered us back to that dusty brick factory. Adjacent to it was a deep and ugly pit from where the factory mined its clay. Down into that pit we dove, as if Maynard was taking his gyro

into the mines of Moria. He spun that little plane around the edges of the pit, and we did a complete circle below ground level, engine roaring, rotor spinning, seagulls jumping out of the puddles.

With momentum on his side and the rotor fully loaded, he flopped us out of the pit, jumped over the hangars, and slid the gyro toward the runway. The machine touched the tarmac gracefully and stopped almost instantly, without the usual bump-and-bounce of a fixed-wing landing. We taxied off primly, as if we had not just performed the most exquisite arabesque in the sky.

I was dazed, as if I had just stared into the sun, when my Annie asked me about the flight. It was hard to describe. Yes, it was flying; yes, it was amazing technology; yes, Maynard is a superb pilot. But most of all, it was just elegant fun. I felt an afterglow. I wanted to blow smoke rings at the ceiling. ✈

SIDEBAR: BACK TO BASICS WITH THE ESSENTIALS OF FLIGHT



Gyrocopters are also known as autogyros or gyroplanes. The technology was invented in the 1920s by a Spanish engineer who was attempting to create a stall-proof aircraft. By the 1930s, autogyros were rolling out from British, French, American, and German workshops. Amelia Earhart set altitude records in a Pitcairn PCA-2 autogyro in 1931.

Originally gyros were powered by air-cooled engines purloined from chainsaws and snowmobiles. Today Rotax, Subaru, Volkswagen, and Viking are popular engine choices. Kits commonly take just 100 to 120 hours to finish, far less than fixed-wing aircraft.

The biggest difference between gyrocopter models is in the cabin design, or more properly, the



FLY FASTER

BECAUSE NOBODY SHIPS **PARTS FASTER**

Yingling Aviation Parts has been setting the standard as a parts supplier since 1946. Located across the runway from Textron Aviation, our ability to get Cessna and Beechcraft parts on the fly is unsurpassed by anyone in the industry.

AOG ORDERS PLACED BEFORE 11:30 a.m. CST, ship on the same day with NO DROP-SHIP CHARGES.



PROP SERVICES

HAVE **CONFIDENCE IN YOUR PROPELLER**, WITH STATE-OF-THE-ART LASER SCANNED PRECISION.

Your Prop is a main component of your aircraft you do not take for granted. Make Yingling your prop source, and have the assurance your prop is ready to perform safely.

Prop Rebuilding / OEM Applications





800.835.0083 [FBO OPEN 24/7/365]
1.316.943.3246
YinglingAviation.com | www.CessnaDirect.com
PARTS DEPT: M-F 7am to 5pm, CST | On call weekends and holidays.
LOCATED AT THE DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER NATIONAL AIRPORT
2010 AIRPORT ROAD, WICHITA, KS 67209





lack thereof. Gyros come in a bewildering variety of sizes, shapes, and capabilities, much more so than fixed-wing aircraft. Some companies offer modern and sleek fully-enclosed cabins made of fiber glass or carbon fiber; skeptics term these designs “Euro-tubs” in acknowledgement of their trans-Atlantic origins. Other companies revere the elemental purity of an open-frame configuration, some of which are barely more than a flying beach chair. Maynard’s bird was a semi-enclosed design, roughly half-way between the two extremes.

Unlike a helicopter whose engine drives the overhead rotor, an autogyro uses a free-spinning rotor that generates lift in the same fashion but is driven by air passing upward through it. The airflow is provided by the engine-driven propeller that moves the aircraft forward. The thrusting propeller can be either on the nose of the aircraft or in the rear

(respectively termed “tractor” or “pusher” configurations).

Because lift is only generated when air is flowing upward through the rotor, the vehicle must be moving forward to take off. Autogyros are not capable of vertical takeoff and, indeed, have longer takeoff rolls than many fixed-wing aircraft.

While they are mechanically simple and easy to fly, any flying machine can bite the careless. One type of accident can occur when a pilot pushes the stick forward too quickly. This causes the nose to drop and causes an instant loss of lift. Another rookie problem is an excessive angle of climb during takeoff, which can cause the plane to roll back on its tail.

Another danger is “duck walking,” which occurs when pilots land with a side loading on the tires; this causes the plane to flounce back and forth

until the rotors slows or the plane is destroyed, whichever comes first.

Schoemaker, the VX1 maker, also cautioned me about the centrifugal force embedded in that spinning rotor. “You’ve got a tremendous amount of power over your head until those blades slow down,” he said. “If you’re landing on a rough field or you’re pulling off the runway, remember you have a big gyroscope over your head. It could tip you over.”

One pilot coached me, “Be sure your competence does not exceed your confidence.”

Dr. Mike Jones is a businessperson, airport advisor, and lifelong professional scribe. He flies a Cessna Centurion and has 4,000 hours in his logbook. He always is available at PilotMike2012@gmail.com. ✈