



Rink Field
Millersburg, IN

Club No. 2959

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February 2004 Newsletter

Hi Guys,

Here it is, that time again and I don't have much to write about. My wife and I just got back from visiting kids in San Diego California and Tyler Texas. While in San Diego we were staying just across the bay from North Island Naval Air Station. That place used to be covered with Navy fighter planes, but now it is mostly helicopters. (Sad) Helicopters always look to me like an accident looking for a place to happen. Son Jeff down in Tyler is finishing up an eighty inch Spitfire built from Brian Taylor plans. I have reached that stage in life where my son builds nicer airplanes than I do. Jeff's "Spit" is really a beauty. He is going to power it with an O.S. 160 two stroke. Like me, he has always been a 4 stroke fan. But he thought this airplane is better suited to a big 2 stroke. He favors Brian Taylor's plans because Taylor always designs for glow engines and so you wind up with a lighter airplane. (Jeff's Theory). He also painted his Spit with Laytex. That is a new idea more and more scale guys are trying. It looks very promising. The paint job is beautiful. I have pictures; I may send them to Stuart so he can put them on our website.

That brings up another good point. Stuart needs pictures and input for our website. If you have any winter projects, be sure to send pictures and info to him.

One of the things we did while in San Diego was go to the Ryan Museum of Flight. It was time well spent. The only problem was we didn't get there until fairly late in the day and the museum closed at 1700. As most of you already know Claude Ryan was one of this country's pioneer aircraft designers. Charles Lindbergh's Spirit of St. Louis was designed and built by

Claude Ryan's company. The second Claude Ryan design that won lots of acclaim was the Ryan ST. There was a beautiful one hanging in the museum. I got a couple of pictures that mean a lot to me because there just are not many of these beautiful old birds left.

We had our meeting at Checkers January 20th, but we didn't get our room and the background noise was so high we didn't even try to conduct any business. We did have a good time just shooting the breeze. It is always fun to get together even when you can't fly. This month's meeting will be at Checkers at 0800 February 21st. We should get our room back this time.

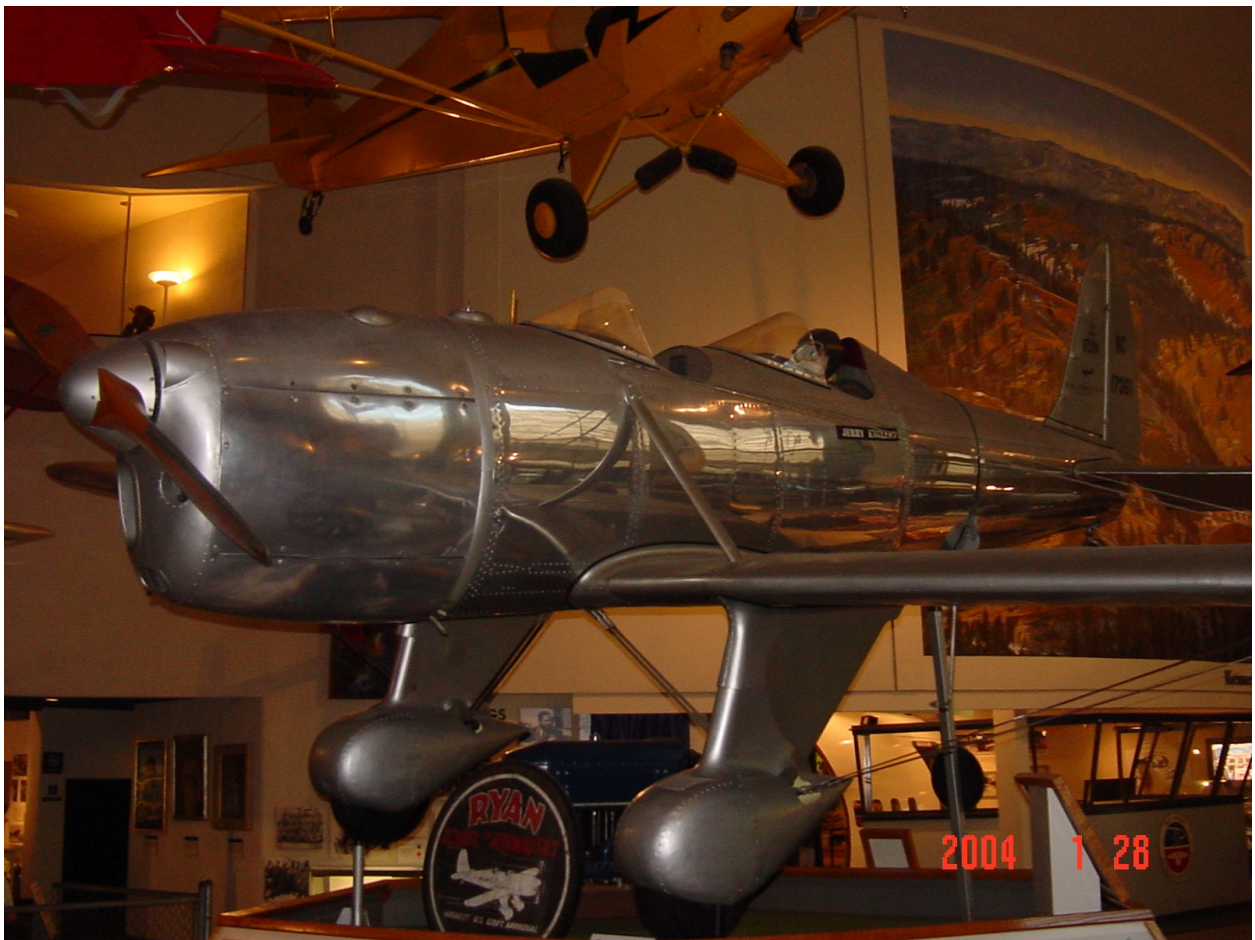
Since I don't have a lot of material to write about this month, I am going to take this opportunity to write a personal opinion. I know that the popular choice these days is to fly ARFs. Very few people are building and flying their own planes built from kits, and fewer still are building from plans. I happen to believe that you guys that don't fly anything but ARFs are missing a fascinating facet of our hobby. I already know what you are going to say. The most popular reason for not building is, "I don't have time". I made a living for, and helped my wife raise four kids. I always had some kind of airplane project in the works. The second reason most guys will come up with is, I can't afford to build because these ARFs are so cheap. I am not so sure that is true. I have an ARF from Great Planes right now and as I look at it I am beginning to realize what they have done. They have robbed me of the most pleasurable part of creating a new airplane.

They did all of the fun and showy stuff and left all of the nitty gritty details for me to work out. Not only that, but those “nitty gritty” details make up a sizable part of the total investment in a new bird.

Another thing that bothers me about ARFs is, they are covered with monocote. I gave up on that stuff years ago because it did not hold up very well and and it contributed very little to the strength of the airframe.

Now, I will admit to just about completely missing at least two flying seasons back during those early years. I had bad luck and wrecked my only bird. I was done until I could rebuild.

It was impossible to have more than one operational airplane at a time because it did take so long to build. I think in this age of ARFs and Monocote, I have the ultimate solution to having it all. Go ahead and fly your ARFs but in the meantime, get a good kit are a set of plans and set about building your favorite airplane. I like to cover my airplanes with fiberglass are SIG coverall. I promise you, that stuff will not lift off and it does add considerable strength (and weight) to the airframe.



The Ryan ST that hangs in the San Diego air museum in Balboa park.



Son Jeff's beautiful Spitfire. Built from Brian Taylor plans.

I hope to see you guys at checkers on the 21st.

Jim Longar
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