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# Skyraider Sentinel

## Skyraider Aviation Welcomes New Club Members!

- Matt Ditson
- Bret Fund
- Dave Julian
- Liz Partridge
- Joe Thielen

## This Month in Aviation History



Concorde

**May 21<sup>st</sup>, 1977...** On this date the Concorde made a special trip from New York to Paris to mark the 50th anniversary of Charles Lindbergh's historic flight on the same route in the Spirit of St. Louis. The Concorde took just 3 hours, 44 minutes, compared with Lindbergh's time of 33 hours, 29 minutes.

### Fun Concorde Facts:

- Cruising speed: Mach 2
- Cruising altitude: 50,000-60,000 ft
- Runway length required for takeoff: 11,778 ft
- Passenger capacity: 100
- Maximum takeoff weight: 84,000 lbs
- Range: 4,058 miles
- Round-trip fare: New York-Paris: \$8,720

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*"We contrive to make the invisible air support us, we relinquish the security of feet on the ground because flying is demanding, delightful, beautiful: because we love it. Very few of us are actually crazy, and nearly all of us manage the risks as well as we can, but we all willingly trade some of our security for the immeasurable beauty of the sky."*

— Paul J. Sampson

## Flight for the Human Spirit Lands in Denver

Michael Combs was declared clinically dead. Very few people recover from that diagnosis, but Michael Combs is not like most people... he recovered, and is now following his dream to fly in all 50 states.



Michael Combs

His mission is to reach 20 million people with the message, "it's never, EVER too late to follow your dreams". His medium is a Remos GX Light Sport Aircraft.

Designated the "Flight for the Human Spirit", Michael set out on April 8<sup>th</sup>. His plan has him covering 19,500 miles in 40 flight days with 135 stops. Flight day #14 concluded at Centennial Airport.

Michael touched down at Centennial in

the early evening of May 17<sup>th</sup>. He planned on staying a couple days in Denver, spending time with family and friends, and talking to the press. The following night, he graciously took time from his hectic schedule to share his inspirational story with our flying club. His message was clear... life is too short to put off your dreams. Follow them now. You never know what surprises tomorrow holds.

To follow Michael's journeys, go to his website: <http://itsneververtoolate.com/>

## Ignorance Abounds

Did you know the HondaJet, which is capable of speeds up to 420kts at altitudes over 40,000 feet is powered by a lawnmower engine? Well... it's not. But if we were to use the same logic applied by the author of a recent letter to *AOPA Pilot* magazine, then we might draw that conclusion.

Jeff Kuklinski, in a letter published in the June 2010 issue of *AOPA Pilot*, laments the notion that some Light Sport Aircraft cost more than his Citabria 7GCBC, even though his Citabria is powered by "a real motor, not a snowmobile engine." The "snowmobile engine" comment is hardly worth addressing, but since I've heard it enough, I suppose I should at least briefly comment.

Rotax has been in the engine business since 1920, and in 2006 produced their six millionth engine. Yes, it is true that

**Congratulations  
are in Order!**

### **First Solos**

- Chris Schultz
- Gary Vogt

### **New Sport Pilots**

- Neil Thomas

## **Upcoming Events**

June 12-13: Platte Valley Fly-In & Open House; Platte Valley Airpark (18V); [www.vafm.org](http://www.vafm.org)

June 19<sup>th</sup>: Boulder Airport Day & Open House; Boulder Municipal Airport (BDU); [www.bouldercolorado.gov/airport](http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/airport)

June 26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>: Never Summer Fly-In; Walden Jackson County Airport (33V); [www.northparkaviation.com](http://www.northparkaviation.com)

June 26<sup>th</sup>: Fort Morgan Fly-In Breakfast; Fort Morgan Municipal Airport (FMM)

July 3<sup>rd</sup>: Granby Airport Pancake Breakfast Fly-In; Granby Airport (GNB)

Aug 21<sup>st</sup>: Classic Aircraft & Car Show; Front Range Airport (FTG)

Aug 28<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup>: Colorado Sport International Air Show; Rocky Mountain Metro Airport (BJC); [www.cosportaviation.org](http://www.cosportaviation.org)

Sep 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>: Wild West Air Fest; Steamboat Springs Airport (SBS)

## **Skyraider Sentinel**

**Page 2 of 2**

some of these engines have been for snowmobiles, but Rotax aircraft engines like the 912 are specifically engineered for aviation use. So, even though Rotax does make snowmobile engines, not every engine they make is a snowmobile engine. By the same token, even though Honda makes lawnmower engines, the Honda HF120 turbofan engine used on the HondaJet is not a lawnmower engine.

The other component of Mr. Kuklinski's assertion is that a Light Sport Aircraft costs more than his Citabria 7GCBC. Again, this is an argument I've heard repeatedly. It usually is raised in the objection of, "Why would I buy X LSA when I could buy Y regular category aircraft for the same price?" Mr. Kuklinski himself hints at an answer in his own letter. He states the "[b]ase price on a Remos is \$135,000, glass panel, etc." Most high-end Light Sport Aircraft come very well-equipped with instrument panels that would put the space shuttle to shame. Quite often the base price on an LSA includes glass panels, radios, transponder, GPS, an array of back up instruments, safety features, and conveniences. The base price on a Citabria 7GCBC (\$125,900) includes very little; no avionics, no intercom, and not even an ELT. By the time you equip the Citabria comparably to many "base model" LSA, you will easily add \$10,000 to the cost.

Another argument brought up in Mr. Kuklinski's letter is the idea that someone at some point promised us Light Sport Aircraft at a cost well under \$100,000 (\$40,000 to \$75,000 in Mr. Kuklinski's assertion). In the years leading up to the passing of the Sport Pilot/Light Sport Aircraft rules, there was indeed some *speculation* that aircraft would be available at low costs, but there was never a "promise".

But even without a "promise" of low-cost LSAs, there are some fixed-wing Light Sport Aircraft available in Mr. Kuklinski's price range. The X-Air LS, for example

has a starting price of \$59,995, well within the price range quoted by Mr. Kuklinski.

Mr. Kuklinski seems to think the entire light sport industry has "lost its way" because not all Light Sport Aircraft are as inexpensive as the X-Air LS. He states that he'd rather buy a Porsche GT3 than a Remos. While that is certainly his choice, if the automobile industry were held to Mr. Kuklinski's standard, then he would not even have the option to buy a Porsche GT3. The entire automobile industry would have been stifled by Henry Ford's promise of a car "so low in price that no man making a good salary will be unable to own one". Having low-cost automobile options is great, but has Ford "lost its way" simply because it offers a \$50,000 Mustang Shelby GT500 in addition to its \$13,000 Fiesta?

The Light Sport Aircraft industry has not "lost its way". If you are to compare apples to apples, Light Sport Aircraft are still less expensive to purchase than regular category aircraft. Looking beyond the acquisition cost, LSA are significantly less expensive to operate. They burn half the fuel of a slightly larger normal category aircraft (such as a Citabria 7GCBC), and generally have lower maintenance costs. Couple that with the reduced training requirements for a Sport Pilot license, and LSA is clearly the most cost effective way to go.

Even after four and a half years of SP/LSA, there is still quite a bit of ignorance surrounding the category and license, as is evidenced by Mr. Kuklinski's AOPA letter. Despite efforts on the part of pilots like Michael Combs to showcase what can be done with a Sport Pilot license, misconceptions continue. As light sport aviation enthusiasts, we need to dispel the myths and misconceptions whenever we can.