



## **Southern Navion Air Group**

Newsletter

September 2016

### **FROM THE PRESIDENT**

The fly-in at Marshall was an outstanding success, despite the east coast contingent being seriously concerned about hurricane Hermione. Those of us who could get away a day earlier than usual had no problems getting out and those still in the East for the storm had to hunker down. Welcome to the hurricane season in the southeast! This year seems to be a tough year for Navions as we had a problem that took two planes out of the contests when Carl Jenkins made a cautionary landing to find a damaged cylinder and "Keys" Herrington flew him home early. JT McMahon had a battery/alternator issue that prohibited flying in the events, but he did get it running for the run home. Not to mention the troubles in Ruidoso.

I had been noticing different age groups at our fly-ins over the past few years. Most of the time, when fly-ins make the newspapers, currently the audience is made up of mature folks (note I did not say "old"), but presently I see less and less of younger people around 10-12 years old. We saw lots of very young kids at Marshall and perhaps one or two older kids who somehow managed to look up from their cell phones. I know the SNAG folks will gladly give rides to veterans out of respect and kids in an attempt to get the younger generation involved with aviation and I support those efforts. We do not need to sponsor kids up through solo, but just enough to prime the pump for them to generate an interest.

The next and final fly-in for 2016 will be at KAAF starting 28 Oct. That is the weekend before the Seafood Festival in Apalachicola and assuming no hurricanes, should be fine weatherwise. Rusty will have the details for the web. There will be an auction for SNAG type things and Ann McSpadden mentioned she was going to add things for the ladies, so plan on clearing out your hanger, kitchen or wherever your hide things and have fun.

Next year it will be Shade Tree, Opelousas, Galveston and one more, in addition to Cannon Creek/Sun&Fun, ANS Nationals at Gastonia, and Oshkosh. Busy year. Dates will be sent when they are finalized.

Fly safe and enjoy your Navion - Wayne

### **MARSHALL FLY-IN REPORT**

Marshall, TX Labor Day fly-in was a great success! SNAG had 12 Navions on the ramp and 23 total members, and two other SNAG members flew in on Sunday with their Cessna 210, Chris and Jodi Meaux. The weather was perfect for Texas in September. Friday afternoon arrivals were complete by 4:39 pm with Bruce Herrington's arrival delayed due to low ceilings in Georgia caused by the hurricane. In attendance were Susan & Lee Holmeses as well as the Wrights who drove. The flyers included: JT & Ora Dell McMahon, Rusty & Wanda Herrington, Bruce Herrington, Jim & DeEdra Carter, Steve & Lita Ware, Wayne & Ellen Whittaker, Grant Gerondale & Greg G. Gerondale (who each flew their own plane), Greg Young & Kevin Domingue (who hitched with Greg), Carl Jenkins, Ike Wiley and Ron Hanselman. (*editor's note*)

Saturday dawn patrol saw some very smooth conditions with 10 Navions in trail. The afternoon bomb drop contest was close between most participants, if you call 240 feet close to the target, ha, ha. The bomb drop winner was Rusty Herrington at 9 feet, then Steve Ware at 33 feet. The spot landing was close as well with Wayne Whitaker on the

line and Steve Ware in second place at 10 feet. Rusty was just short of the line in the drink.

Sunday morning started with the balloon bust followed by the Poker Run to three airfields and returning to Marshall. One Navion busted six out of six balloons, the Rescue Wagon of Greg Young, flown by Greg and Kevin Domingue; Tied for first place. Rusty and Steve both busted two each with a close call on the third balloon passing through the prop. As for the Poker run, 5 card stud, Wanda Herrington won with three of a kind. The non-fliers made a road trip to The Boardwalk in Shreveport, LA for shopping and lunch, and then on Sunday they toured Jefferson, TX for the antique stores and old style general store and soda shop.

SNAG made the local Sunday newspaper featuring Ron Hanselman's and Steve Ware's Navions, and they are now local celebrities.

Good times, good fellowship, good flying, good food, good FBO accommodations, and good memories. We can't wait till the next fly-in in October at Apalachicola, FL (KAAF)

Fly safe, Steve Ware

## LESSONS LEARN IN A FORCED LANDING

As you may have read in the last newsletter, I was involved in a forced landing during the annual ANS convention which resulted in the destruction of our beloved Navion. Several SNAG members have asked me to provide a more detailed description of the event and my thoughts on what I might have done differently. I'm happy to do so, with the hope that others may benefit from my experience. Immediately below is my abridged report as provided to the NTSB and FAA, following that are my ruminations on lessons learned with the disclaimer that they are just my opinions.

Statement of Marion Lee Holmes, PIC of NAA Navion, Model "A", N91137, Serial Number NAV 4-31 on June 24, 2016. We were one of several planes that departed Sierra Blanca Regional Airport for a preplanned 4-leg route, roughly around the Lincoln National Park mountain range. The pilots met at 0730 at Ruidoso Airport for a pilot briefing that included weather, conditions and routing for the proficiency contest. Weather was VFR with southerly winds 10-15 knots, scattered clouds 12,000' and no hazards. The route originated at SSR then to F37/Carrizozo, to KALM/Alamogordo, east to the Pinion VOR/PIO then north back to KSSR. I took off at 0938L and leveled off at 7,500' MSL, flying the first half of the route as planned without incident. I noted that the engine seemed to be running a bit ough. At 20 minutes into the flight I ran an instrument scan and noted on my knee-pad that cylinders #1 & #5 were running substantially cooler than the other four cylinders.

At thirty-two minutes into the flight we were overflying the Lincoln National Park/Sacramento mountain range when both my passenger and I noted an acrid burning smell. Looking around and under the aircraft, I was about 1000' AGL and saw only mountainous terrain with steep canyon walls and no apparent emergency landing sites. I executed an immediate right turn toward the closest avenue off the mountains. I made a distress call, both over interplane frequency and over KALM CTAF 122.8. As soon as we cleared the edge of the escarpment, I turned northwest toward KALM. As we were losing altitude, I established best glide of 80 mph and was adjusting mixture and throttle to try and keep the engine running, which it did, but not at sufficient power to produce lift. At 5-6nm from KALM the oil pressure dropped to zero and I was unable to remain airborne.

We were then over 4250' MSL rocky arid mesquite desert not well-suited for landing. We spotted a short section of gravel road and I set up for a base turn to land. At around 200'-300' AGL I extended the landing gear and we landed approximately 100 yards short of the road, having run out of gliding altitude. The plane continued forward until a drainage wash/culvert sheared off the nose wheel and left main landing gear. We came to a stop 50' further on the road-bed. I switched off the master power, moved the fuel select switch to OFF and we egressed the aircraft.

I ensured my passenger and myself were uninjured, noted I had a cell signal and then called 911. One of our fellow Navion pilots had established an overhead orbit and also called in emergency services via KALM CTAF. Emergency services arrived about 15 minutes later. Upon the arrival of the FAA Safety Inspector (6.5 hours later, having driven from Albuquerque), we conducted a walk-around and inspection of the aircraft. At his direction, I opened the damaged cowlings. Upon visual inspection, the number 5 cylinder cover had two holes of approx. 1" diameter. The inspector removed the cylinder rocker arm cover and noted that the exhaust valve was missing, presumed ingested into the cylinder. The rocker arm, spring and related hardware were severely damaged and the engine block was cracked immediately above the cylinder. Later review of my maintenance records shows that my A&P had replaced cylinder #5 in 2006 with a remanufactured cylinder which had 772 hours at the time of failure. The engine was pulled and sent to TCM for further metallurgical analysis. NOTE: As of this writing, the TCM findings and final NTSB report are still pending.

#### THOUGHTS AND LESSONS LEARNED:

- I had discontinued having my oil analyzed 5 years ago and was just performing a visual inspection of the cut open oil filter. It is impossible to know if the cylinder failure could have been predicted by metallurgical analysis of the oil, but I'm sure I'll religiously have my oil sampled in the future.
- The engine had been running rough, but not to the degree I was concerned about it being airworthy. The prior day, I pulled and inspected injectors and plugs on several cylinders but found nothing obvious, deciding it was maybe a mag or wiring issue and would address after the convention. In addition, I had been forced to field-repair a small hole in the number 6 valve cover using JB weld two days prior. I had successfully test-flown the plane and checked that repair prior to the proficiency flight. In no way was that field repair found to have contributed to the cylinder #5 failure. I will not fly my plane in the future with the engine running in any known unusual manner.
- Several years ago, I had created an onboard emergency kit- The water alone was key in remaining healthy. Surface temps in June quickly went into the high 90's in the desert and had emergency services been delayed even a couple of hours we could have been in bad shape- as it was we went through 6 quarts of water.
- Analyze your situation and make a decision immediately. Had we delayed turning south even one more minute, we likely wouldn't have made it off the mountain and been forced into a non-survivable landing.
- I became fixated on looking for a flat landing site and flying the plane. If you have anyone else in the plane, tell them their only job is to watch the airspeed indicator and make sure you don't stall.
- Gear up or down? It will depend on your situation... The terrain looked pretty flat from the air, so I elected to lower the gear. Their subsequent removal slowed the plane and absorbed impact that otherwise would have been transferred to my body, so I don't regret my decision.
- Get the damn canopy open in flight! In my fixation on looking for flat terrain, I forgot about this, even though I routinely brief passengers that I'll open the canopy in the event of engine failure. After skidding across the rocky desert, the fuselage was twisted and I initially couldn't get the canopy open. In panic I thought about the possibility of a post-crash fire. I unbuckled, turned around and placing my feet against the instrument panel, wedged my hands and shoulder against the canopy latch and was eventually able to push it about 8"-10" open. You'll be amazed at how you can be encouraged to get out of a small opening with sufficient motivation!
- Turn off power and fuel immediately. We were standing in a pool of AvGas when we got out due to broken fuel lines.
- I've practiced many simulated loss of engine drills with instructors. In every situation I was in TX or LA, over relatively flat terrain and there was always a highway, nicely

plowed field or airport within gliding distance. All that practice likely kept me from doing anything dumb that might have killed us, but I was not well-prepared for a mountainous/desert forced landing. If you are going to fly somewhere substantially different from your home environment, get a local check out and discuss emergency procedures with a local instructor.

- Make sure you have your plane insured at an appropriate hull value. My experience with Falcon Insurance and the QBE underwriter was outstanding in every way and will allow us to find our next Navion without undue financial stress.

## ANNUAL DUES INFORMATION

As long as we have been members of SNAG, annual dues always come due in October/November which is the end of our flying season. That tradition continues because, quite frankly, y'all don't pay me enough to keep up with who paid when throughout the year. ☺ After the October fly-in, all members who show "current" for dues will be changed to "owe dues". I'm going to upload the latest Membership Roster as an Excel file on the SNAG FB page as well as send it out to everyone that I have an email address for. For those of you who get your newsletter via snail mail/paper, you can always check your address label to see if you owe dues or have paid for several years out.

If you are sending dues, please make sure you are using my new mailing address. It is 6918 Van Etten Street, Houston, TX 77021.

- Susan Holmes

## MEMBER INFORMATION CHANGES

Have you moved? Changed email addresses? Gotten a new cell number or home phone number? New tail number? **Call or email me to update your information on the SNAG Member Roster. Susan @ 254-780-9338 or susaneholmes@sbcglobal.net.** The current member roster is on the Facebook page (under documents). Make sure your friends can stay in touch!

## APALACHICOLA, FL October 28-30, 2016

Airport KAAF Apalachicola Regional-Cleve Randolph Field	
Unicom 122.8	ASOS 119.925 (850) 653-8271
Elevation 19' MSL	Pattern Altitude 820' MSL
Runways 6-24, 14-32, 18-36	

Best Western Hotel: 850-563-9131

Hosts Wayne and Ellen Whitaker

**SNAG NEWSLETTER/AUGUST 2016**  
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**SNAG**