



Cross-country cruise



The big airshow at Oshkosh attracts hundreds of thousands of people each summer to its miles and miles of aircraft and pilot gear on display. Although it often feels like every pilot since Wilbur and Orville has flown in for a bratwurst and some cheese curds, not everyone can make the show each year, or at all. And not everyone will be able to make it out to AOPA Expo in Hartford this month (although we'd sure like to see you try).

Since we needed to make the trip anyway—to take the sweepstakes airplane to its next date with the interior shops—we decided to give pilots across the Midwest a chance to see the 1977 Cessna Cardinal we're refurbishing. As we flew over Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma, we'd stop where we could and announce via local media and pilot groups (as well as in AOPA's electronic newsletter, *ePilot*) our estimated dates and times of arrival at each airport.

Dan Gryder, of the AvNet (our field project manager for the airplane), and I hail from the corn-fed states of Illinois and Iowa, respectively, and over

The Cardinal barnstorms the Midwest

BY JULIE K. BOATMAN

the years we've become closely acquainted with the many pilots who keep the happy secret of open skies and flat farmland (suited well to the grass strip) to themselves as much as possible. Although not every barn in the breadbasket of the United States clandestinely closets a taildragger owned by your father's father, some enclaves of aviation come close.

"This is my only chance . . ."

Gryder and I departed Casa de Aero Airpark in Hampshire, Illinois, on



Pilots and AOPA members at Whiteside County Airport in Rock Falls, Illinois, check out the Cardinal.



At Iowa City (left), we showed off the airplane and talked with local media to get the word out about the benefits of GA.

August 5 for Whiteside County Airport in Rock Falls. M&M Aviation hosted the local "old pilot's association" (self-titled) for a Sunday morning show of the Cardinal on the ramp. This close to Wisconsin, a couple of pilots had seen the airplane at AirVenture, but most couldn't make it because of demands on time or money. We'd hear

this theme repeated throughout our trip west.

Next stops that day? Iowa City, Iowa, and Green Castle Aero Club in Oxford, Iowa (see "Little Strip, Extended Family," May 2003 *Pilot*). The local newspaper had announced our visit several days before, so we had quite a contingent show up—plus a reporter

to cover the details and put a positive general aviation story in the newspaper on Monday morning. We had our second doughnuts of the day (I think Gryder had a third; he's an appreciative guest like that), which came courtesy of Jay and Mary Honeck, owners of the nearby Alexis Park Inn. Jay Honeck is AOPA's Airport Support Network volunteer for the Iowa City airport. Then the Sky-Tec starter snapped the engine back to life, and

Tools from the trenches

4 flight-planning fundamentals

Whether your airplane is brand new, newly rebuilt, or only new to you, you need to take a few extra precautions when setting out for the first time on a cross-country journey in your new or updated ride.

1. Keep the first leg short. Even if you have a lot of time in the same make and model of airplane, you might plan the first leg for only an hour or so. This strategy allows you to check fuel burn and other systems before you get too far down the magenta line.

2. Keep it day VFR. Launching straight into instrument conditions usually isn't necessary—and getting the hang of a particular airplane's quirks is best done in the daylight. You also keep your options open in case there are post-maintenance headaches to address.

3. Keep the POH close by. Review the checklists and operating procedures before you take off, even if you're flying your own airplane again after a refurbishment. Take some time in flight to manage the powerplant according to the performance charts in the book—it's a great way to get your head into this particular cockpit.

4. Keep it simple. If you can avoid flying to a schedule for those first few hours, do so. Plan a couple of days for a return trip home so that weather, maintenance, and fatigue don't become serious issues.



Featured contributors

L-3 Communications Avionics Systems

L-3 Communications cuts a wide swath as a major defense contractor—but its healthy Avionics Systems division probably interests pilots most. As a leading manufacturer of safety products for general aviation, Avionics Systems is likely best known for its WX-series of spherics (lightning detection) devices—systems like the WX-500 in the Catch-A-Cardinal show you where the bolts are *now*.

The division also has more plans up its collective sleeves for integrated cockpit systems. SmartDeck weaves together primary and multifunction displays with flight control systems to provide complete situational awareness, while today the company's IRIS enhanced vision system (available through a supplemental type certificate for Beechcraft King Airs) helps pilots see through low-visibility conditions. Call 616/949-6600 or visit the Web site (www.l-3com.com/as).

Michelin

From a small rubber factory in Clermont-Ferrand, France, established in 1889, Michelin has grown to become a market leader in tires across several transportation segments. But Michelin had its foothold in aviation early on—as a manufacturer of aircraft for the French government. From 1915 to 1918, Michelin built 1,884 bombers in its Carmes factory.

Today, Michelin Aircraft Tire, of Greenville, South Carolina, has provided tires to NASA's space shuttle program, and has developed radial tires for use on the Boeing 777 and 737. The Michelin Air tires and Airstop tubes on the Catch-A-Cardinal continue this legacy of high-quality aircraft tires. Visit the Web site (www.airmichelin.com) or call 877/503-8071.

Cleveland Wheels & Brakes

Aircraft Wheel & Brake, a division of Parker Hannifin Corporation, has its origins in 1918 with the founding of the parent company by Arthur Parker. Its aviation ties began in 1927, when Charles Lindbergh specified Parker hydraulic fittings for the *Spirit of St. Louis*. The Aircraft Wheel & Brake division launched in 1936 to concentrate on wheels, brakes, and other aircraft hydraulic components.

The division, located in Avon, Ohio, manufactures Cleveland-brand wheel kits for many single and multiengine general aviation aircraft, along with hydraulic and mechanical drum, external, and internal brake assemblies. We were in great need of new brakes on the sweepstakes Cardinal—and now we have them. Visit the Web site (www.parker.com) or call 440/937-6211.

we launched for the 10-minute trip over to Green Castle.

As a special treat, Gryder and I had our pictures taken with Don Nelson, founder of the Green Castle Aero Club. Between the two of them, Nelson and Gryder have more than 1,000 solo signoffs to their credit. I've soloed a whopping 13 students, so my hat's off to these prolific instructors! I've learned a lot from them both—Nelson brought me up through my private certificate, and Gryder worked with me on my airline transport pilot certificate and Douglas DC-3 type rating.

Our last leg of the day echoed my first solo cross-country flight almost 20 years ago, from Green Castle down to Bloomfield, Iowa, where Heartland Aviation sheltered the Cardinal for the night. Our approach into Bloomfield was definitely different—we loaded the RNAV (GPS) Runway 36 approach into the Garmin GNS 430W and switched the S-Tec Fifty Five X autopilot over to Approach mode. With the Cardinal configured, we just sat back and watched the autopilot capture the inbound course and WAAS-generated pseudo glideslope (the Wide Area Aug-

mentation System makes it possible for GPS navigators so equipped to generate an electronic glideslope that displays as a glideslope on the course deviation indicator or horizontal situation indicator; pilots must continue to adhere to minimum altitudes and any step-down fixes on the approach). I adjusted the power and added the first notch of flaps, and the airplane flew itself on down a stabilized approach into this strip of pavement—no ILS required!

Coming home

In keeping with the family theme, we wanted to share the Cardinal with as many employees of our contributors as possible, so they could see firsthand their hard work paying off in a beautiful airplane. The next day, August 6, we stopped at a true hotbed of avionics development: Olathe, Kansas—right on our route. Honeywell Bendix/King has been based in Olathe for decades; they supplied the Cardinal with the KI 525 HSI that has helped us stay on course so well. And Garmin International, provider of most of the gee-whiz in your new radio stack, keeps expanding its Olathe digs. Strange-bedfellows-in-aviation note: The two companies'

This is not a King Air 350.

Go ahead, count the windows.

This King Air 200 could easily be mistaken for a King Air 350 thanks to the addition of a new Winglet System by BLR Aerospace. Winglets have taken the industry by storm, delivering a range of benefits that include dramatic increases in climb rate, cruise speed and fuel savings — plus striking good looks. So keep your airplane. But change your performance.

Do you have your winglets yet?

BLR Aerospace
Performance Innovation



800.257.4847 US & Canada
425.353.6591 International
www.BLRaerospace.com
davemarone@BLRaerospace.com

BLR
PERFORMANCE INNOVATION

Who's behind us?

Scott Collins of Precision Avionics

Keeping it in the family has been a theme for Precision Avionics since day one. Jackie Black founded Precision Avionics Specialists in 1988 and hung his shingle at Tara Field in Hampton, Georgia, for more than 18 years. And when he sold the business to Scott Collins in September 2006, he stayed with the company as its avionics manager, putting his depth of experience to use.

Collins also brought on board Black's nephew, Tony, and Frankie Smith, two talented avionics technicians. Collins' wife, Wendy, keeps everything organized in the office. The whole team at Precision has been instrumental in bringing together the final components of avionics installation and instrument and electrical systems in your Catch-A-Cardinal—they get up early and stay late to get the job done. Call 770/946-8555 or visit the Web site (www.precision-avionics.com).

flight departments sit next to each other on the west side of the field at New Century Aircenter.

While Gryder and I experienced a kind of homecoming during the early part of the trip, we also participated in another homecoming: the Cardinal's visit to Wichita. Thirty years ago, N18729 taxied out for a test flight at Cessna's Pawnee plant, and the people at Cessna have been instrumental in making this sweepstakes project—now N778RD—the over-the-top refurbishment it has been. From extensive parts support to chasing down random facts about the airplane for my reporting, Cessna employees work hard and are proud of their product, and it felt right to include a trip to visit them along the way.

Yingling Aviation, the FBO with the longest track record as a Cessna dealer, accommodated the Cardinal for the evening, and even gave it a much-needed bath—I think we picked up every slow bug between Chicago and Wichita on our travels.

Beauty on the inside

The last day of our miniature barnstorming tour, August 7, took the Cardinal from Wichita to Alva, Oklahoma, just 80 nm across the plains. In Alva, Vantage Plane Plastics and Aerodesigns

waited in great anticipation of their task: building and installing the Cardinal's brand-new interior.

Aerodesigns had reupholstered the pilot and co-pilot seats already, and Plane Plastics had been forming new molds for our interior components. So when we landed at Alva, they were collectively ready to go. We can't wait to see the results—the Cardinal will truly be a beauty on the inside, matching its pretty exterior.

ACPA

E-mail the author at julie.boatman@aopa.org.

INTERACTIVE ▶

AOPA PILOT ONLINE



To see the latest video from the Cardinal's cross-country flying, visit AOPA Pilot Online.

www.aopa.org/pilot/sweeps0710

OUR WEATHER IS GREAT FOR FLYING

- searchable NOTAMS
- graphical TFRs, AIRMETs & SIGMETs
- 12, 24, 36 & 48 hr prog charts
- icing potential
- surface analysis
- weather depiction

AND NOW IT'S FAA QICP CERTIFIED*

Visit www.weatherTap.com/freetrial or call 800-337-5263 today for a free trial preview.

weatherTAP.com
AVIATION WEATHER
FAA Qualified Internet Communications Provider

*FAA QICP status applies only to the QICP certified Aviation Weather section.

CONTACT

Aerodesigns

www.aerodesignsinteriors.com

The AvNet

www.theaviatornetwork.com

Alexis Park Inn

www.alexisparkinn.com

Cessna Aircraft Company

www.cessna.com

Garmin International

www.garmin.com

Green Castle Aero Club

www.greencastle-aeroclub.com

Heartland Aviation

641/664-1255

Honeywell Bendix/King

www.bendixking.com

M&M Aviation

www.mmaviation.net

Sky-Tec

www.skytecair.com

S-Tec

www.s-tec.com

Vantage Plane Plastics

www.planeplastics.com

Yingling Aviation

www.yinglingaviation.com