

# Expanded Horizons

Sailplane project leads to adventure in the air—and on the ground

## Dan Bryan

As a result of having been in Moriarty, New Mexico, for the Schweizer 1-26 Nationals in 1995, and getting involved in both a club operation and private soaring in the early months of 1996, I stumbled onto a 1-26B sitting in the back of the club hangar. No one was able to direct me to its owner, but everyone I talked to said the sailplane had not been flown in quite some time.

I got a flight review from Sundance Aviation, a private soaring operator at the airport, in March 1996, while I was in Albuquerque on business. I was fortunate enough at that time to also get the name of the owner of the forgotten 1-26. Still being in the “once bitten twice shy” stage after having owned a different 1-26, I took my time and was cautious in considering the purchase of this one, serial number 313.

It turned out that George Applebay (well known for his work on fiberglass sailplanes) had annulled this aircraft on several occasions. He had good things to say about its structure, but stopped short of giving it a clean bill of health. He said if I purchased it, he would insist I fly it no more than one season or 100 hours, whichever came first; then I had to replace the fabric. I thought that was a good idea anyway because this sailplane was dog ugly.

I contacted the owner and made arrangements to discuss the purchase of 313 after I returned from a trip to Michigan. I had not decided to buy the aircraft, but I figured I would make my decision after I got more details from the owner.

Upon my return from Michigan I was excited about the purchase of the 1-26. I hoped 313 turned out to be a good find because it was in pretty good shape and came with many extras such as arm rests, movable rudder pedals, and the like. Ultimately I decided to purchase the ship, and upon getting it home, my first flight was two hours. I contin-

ued to fly the ship until December 1996 and logged several impressive flights.

After finishing the season, we stripped 313 down to bare bones. The process of using Poly-Fiber fabric and painting the ship to readiness took two years. Don't let anybody convince you that a fabric project will take only 500 hours. Over that two-year time frame I put most of my extra money into 313.

While the airplane was down, I moved from Clovis, New Mexico, to Roswell for a job advancement. Right about the same time I had a serious motor vehicle accident.



My progress on the refurbishment of 313 slowed significantly. I put the sailplane up for sale in the 1-26 Association's newsletter, but then I changed my mind. While my recuperation from the accident was slow, I eventually went back to seriously working on 313 and forgot all about the advertisement in the newsletter of the 1-26 Association, a division of the Soaring Society of America. Luckily, there had been no serious bids on it.

I still had an instrument panel I had put together from a previous sailplane I had owned, and so, upon installing the total energy probe, I hooked all those instruments up. Instruments that had been sitting around since 1991 were finally going to be used.

I wrote the 1-26 Association telling members what it was like to finally complete 313. And further, what it is like to have those instru-

ments connected. I also asked them to remove the advertisement, if they still had it, as the sailplane was no longer for sale.

During the time I was laid up from work and still working on the 313, I started to write a book about my experiences in obtaining a sailplane pilot certificate, purchasing and rebuilding 313, and some of my adventures after having completed the project. The book is entitled *Real Men Land Out* and has an accompanying cowboy song called “The Ballad of Jim Crisp.” Both can be purchased, either separately or as a package, through the Soaring Society of America's merchandise web page, [www.ssa.org](http://www.ssa.org), or at [www.lenticularproductions.com](http://www.lenticularproductions.com), where a sample of the ballad can be heard as well.

Any other inquiries can be directed to me directly at [dan.bryan@verizon.net](mailto:dan.bryan@verizon.net).



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1) Make sure there's enough resolution. What looks good on your computer screen may not work in print. Generally, a full-resolution picture from a 2 megapixel camera or better is required.

2) Don't print it from your computer and send the print. While it is possible to get a publication-usable print from a personal computer, it requires special paper and know-how.

3) Don't place the file into a Word document or make a PDF of it. Please send it as a JPG or TIFF file.

4) Name your file. Your camera will put a name on your picture that won't make sense to anyone.

Change the file name to your name and the airplane type, such as “SmithGlasair.jpg.” Name the word processing document similarly, such as “SmithGlasair.doc.”

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