

# TIGER TALES

The Newsletter of the Thorp T-18 Mutual Aid Society

Issue 1 January 2011



**Kentucky Dam 2010** – A picture perfect weekend!  
Gary Green N218V - Lee Walton N589LW - Roy Farris N4588 (aircraft owned by Eric Smithhenry)

## IN THIS ISSUE

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>A New Chapter</b> – Lee Walton .....                                   | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>Kentucky Dam 2010</b> – Kyle Strohl .....                              | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>Mixture Safety Return Spring</b> – David Read .....                    | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>Spring 2011 Gathering</b> – Scott Hinton .....                         | <b>13</b> |
| <b>The Joys of a new Thorp Owner</b> – Scott Hinton .....                 | <b>13</b> |
| <b>A word from Worthy Warnack</b> – Worthy Warnack.....                   | <b>15</b> |
| <b>A new Thorp hatches! NX115RX is ready to Fly!</b> - Rich Brazell ..... | <b>16</b> |
| <b>Spring Gathering Raffle</b> – Lee Walton.....                          | <b>17</b> |
| <b>Classifieds/Miscellaneous</b> – Lee Walton .....                       | <b>18</b> |

---

**A New Chapter** – Lee Walton

Greetings fellow Thorp fans! I hope this finds all of you in good health, spirits and ready for a year of quality Thorpin'! For those who are not aware, Roy Farris retired at the end of 2010 from the duties of T-18 Newsletter editor. I'm sure we all feel that Roy deserves a very big thank you for the 10 years he was at the helm. I'm sure I speak for all by saying thank you Roy, without your dedication and hard work who knows where we'd be right now!

My name is Lee Walton; many of you will remember me as my father John Walton's right hand man back in the late 70's and 80's. Others may know me as the guy who does not shut up on the "ThorpForum". Let's just say I'm a little enthusiastic about the Thorp! My earliest memories as a young boy were of Dad and the Thorp. He said many times, as our T-18 grew and evolved so did I. So our family Thorp N51863 is a sibling of mine as well as a pleasant reminder of my dad and the great adventures we had crisscrossing the country. Sadly, Dad passed away in 1988 when I was a wee 18 years old and not capable of properly caring for that very special airplane. After a strict interview process, my good friend Wendell Green purchased the family Thorp and has cared for it ever since. Put short, I could not have found a better guy to adopt my old childhood friend Thorp T-18 N51863 SN: 46.

Out of college I flew corporate/charter in various equipment (King Air Series, Lears, Westwinds, Beechjet, Citations, etc). After 5 years of 1000 hr per year flying I decided I was more of a sport pilot than a professional

pilot and started a second career in software development (My BS is in Computer Science/Math). My early years and experience in the corporate aviation world made me appreciate the Thorp and its flying qualities. With this in mind I immediately began the search for a suitable Thorp to rejuvenate. Since then I have restored two Thorps from the ground up, and repaired a couple as well. I'm on my third T-18 project now and do not plan on quitting any time soon! Put short I'm about as big of a Thorp fan as you will find!



N51863 at "The Valley" June 2010

---

**Newsletter Format** – Lee Walton

I hope you all enjoy the new format of our newsletter. As I've promised, "Tiger Tales" will not be a duplication of dialog found on the website "ThorpForum". My intent is to publish four issues;

- Kentucky Dam recap
- Sun n Fun recap
- Spring Fly-In recap
- Oshkosh Air Venture recap

A quick overview of the new format; "Tiger Tales" as I'm calling it will no longer be a builders assist document. At this point we have almost 50 years documented in the old

newsletters, every possible topic has been covered multiple times. I have posted searchable electronic versions of the newsletters on the website "T18.Net" <http://t18.net/memberslogon.asp> this is available to all current MAS members. Newsletters from now forward will be more of a true "newsletter" first flights, event recaps, and service announcements etc.

---

### **Kentucky Dam 2010 – Kyle Strohl**

It was a warm Friday in October when I arrived at a little airport after a three and a half hour drive from Olney IL. I had come to this airport for two reasons; I was going to eat a two inch pork chop that night and I was bringing a vehicle so my father in law could use it after he landed. Dave Read had spent the last 6 years telling me all about the fly-in that has occurred the second weekend of October for the past 22 years. He would regale my wife and me about the activities and the people. I decided to take the plunge and join him and my mother in law, Karen Read, for the weekend. They wanted a vehicle and I wanted a pork chop. Little did I know that on my return trip I would be picking out my Thorp's colors.

I arrived at Kentucky Dam Airport, M34, around noon on Friday. Dave and I had picked a box full of apples from his dad's tree figuring people wouldn't mind a nice apple while they watched people arrive. The fly-in had a good number of planes already on the field when I arrived. Being a bit shy, I rushed to the picnic table that Dave had told me would be there and plopped the apples down on the table. A very nice lady asked me about the apples and I replied "Dave Read said these

apples are for anybody that wants one." Forgetting my manners in my shyness, I quickly stated that I was Dave Read's son in law. The nice lady asked me if I was going to dinner with them at Patti's and I told her that I was. She asked my name and handed me a name badge with a marker. Not having seen the other name badges yet I scribbled my first name down. I thanked her and she asked when Dave might be arriving. After telling her that he and two other planes would be about an hour longer, I set my chair up and prepared my camera.



Wendell Green's Wing Derringer D-1 (Thorp T-17)

I went around and photographed the planes on the field. There were many types of planes on the field at this point; Thorps, a Swift, a RV, a gunmetal two engine plane that I later learned was a Derringer (nicknamed the two engine Thorp), and a bunch of top wing multi-passenger planes. I photographed them all. The afternoon was spent photographing the arrival of planes and hearing people enjoy the apples I had delivered.

After a little bit, a somewhat familiar voice was heard on the radio. He was stating that a three ship was coming in, but no one recognized the numbers he said. This was Dr. Scott leading the two Thorps to Kentucky

Dam. They came in formation and as they were about to pass over the airport another voice was heard. Red had arrived at the same time, but the three ship was too great for him to take on himself, even with those bombs he has on his wings. Red decided to land knowing he was beat and vowed to avenge this loss later on. The pilot of Red was none other than Lee Walton. I met him on the field and hurried to photograph his plane before the three ship landed.



Dr. Stine leading David Read and Roy Farris in to M34



Dr. Scott Stine! Pilot/Thorpe enthusiast first, Dr. second!

The three ship got tired of showing off and decided to land. I took some pictures of the planes as they taxied to park. They all went and checked in with Teresa, the nice lady from before, but Lee wasn't about to set still

for long. When there is flying to be done, Lee tends to be grounded for as little as possible. The guys decided they were going to fly to Murray, Kentucky to see if they could intercept the "Florida Gang". Three thorsps flew out on a mission. Formation had been discussed on the ground and Lee took lead. I had taken my camera, but being a 6'4" 270lb broad shoulder man, the cockpit felt too small to get the proper angle for a photograph.

At Murray's Kyle-Oakley Field, KCEY, we were unable to locate the three missing Thorps previously thought to be grounded at the field. The three ship fleet left KCEY and returned to M34. When we returned the "Florida Gang" arrived a few minutes later. The people had been eating apples and visiting with one another. To an outsider it looked like one close knit group, more an extended family than a bunch of people with Thorps. Most people gathered around the three planes that made up the "Florida Gang". The group was well received and a car was driven on the field to pick up their baggage. It seemed with 18 thorsps on the field, this was a pretty good turnout.

Dr. Scott, Roy Farris, and Lee took to the air a couple of times; giving rides and getting more formation flying practice. I took a few pictures of the group and finished photographing any late arrivals and planes I had missed. After the boys got done playing, it was time to head into the hotel to get cleaned up for supper, the main reason I had came. I couldn't wait for the food at Patti's.

We arrived at the hotel with little time to change before we were supposed to meet in the lobby to make sure everyone had rides for dinner. A quick change and a rinse of the face in our lovely hotel room was all it took for me

to be ready to depart. A pork chop was waiting to be my dinner. I barely noticed the beautiful view offered by the hotel. I was informed that this room was not on the side that my in laws normally staid. The hotel was two stories but built in the side of a hill so the bottom floor was not accessible from the "top". The door opened out to a little porch and a great view. The hotel rested on the lake. The trees were changing their leaf color and were far enough apart to over great gaps that framed the water. Bike and walking trails were all over and a few paths that extended to the wake breaks that allowed you to walk all the way to the end out on the lake itself. Had I not been preoccupied with a stomach I had forgotten to feed that day in my haste and excitement, I would have taken more time to enjoy the beauty of the hotel.

We made it to the lobby and were assigned our passengers. The group gathered around and chatted while waiting for the rest to wander to the lobby and be assigned a seat to take them into town. We left a little early and were one of the first groups to make it to patties. We had reservations for 60 people. I have never been to a restaurant that was big enough to handle a party of 60 like it was nothing, nor been a part of a 60 person party. Our actual number was more like 54, but we couldn't all fit in one room. Patti's is one of those places you need to see to believe. They decorate almost every inch of space. It has a homey feel to it and my wife would have loved it. The waitresses took our orders. Drinks were served in a mason jar. Remember if you plan on drinking tea, sweet tea gets sweeter the further south you go so it will be plenty sweet for most.

The tradition is to order a 2 inch pork chop, aka the house specialty. However they have three house specialties so I confused the



waitress when I ordered my pork chop as the menu has it listed; The House Specialty. I decided on steak fries as my potato. When the food arrived my mouth watered. Before me was a giant pork chop whose juices were running all over my plate and my "steak fries". Their idea of steak fries is different than most other peoples. Steak fries to them is a potato that has been quartered and fried. I devoured my pork chop with no amount of grace. I dipped my "fries" in my pork chop juices that remained on my plate. The juice had enough flavor that I didn't need to dip them in anything else. The bread had been served to us in a flower pot that it had been baked in. I used a chunk of their flower pot bread to sop up the rest of the tasty liquids. Along with the bread was a strawberry butter that my mother in law raved about to my wife when we had a recap of the weekend for her.



A trip to Patti's isn't really dieter friendly, but you do need to save room for dessert. Dessert at Patti's was as big a deal as the main course. I think the waitress rattled off 17 desserts. There were a few meringues, some fruit pies, chocolate pies, brownies, and even ice cream pies. I had the turtle ice cream pie, because the waitress talked way too fast for me to hear the details or names of all the pies. I was listening for coconut because I don't like coconut. A good portion of pies had coconut, but the ice cream pie didn't and it was the last one listed. I was very happy with my choice. The meringues were mile high meringues. The white top of a meringue was about 6 inches tall. My ice cream pie was delicious. I decided then that I would have to come back just for the dinner at Patti's.



We discussed things like macintosh apples, the actual apple not the computer though word play abounded with that distinction. If anyone has access to Macintosh Apples, send one to Lee so he can remember how well they taste. I learned from Roy Farris that "Real Men Don't Use Straws."

Leaving Patti's with a full belly and a satisfied look on my face was a great time. We drove back to the hotel to start social hour. This consisted of drinks and conversation. People discussed their year, their plane, and anything else that found its way into conversation. This county of Kentucky is a dry county and so all booze is BYOB. Most people share and Ben, Teresa's husband, opens a bar. We called it an early night that night, but first we scheduled a breakfast date.

Friday night's supper was the best meal of the whole trip, but the buffet at the hotel was nothing to snub your nose at. There was a fair amount of people already at breakfast by the time we arrived. We found a table and joined in the conversation. A couple from Ohio who were currently building a Thorp sat near us and talked a bit about their building experience. Karen invited the wife along for the shopping that a good chunk of the ladies do that day. This weekend happens to fall on the same weekend as a small festival with a parade. This takes place in the same town as Patti's restaurant. The women shop the little stores and the festival brings a large amount of street vendors for them to peruse. The majority of the pilots go to a fly-in in the afternoon.

After our breakfast we were itching to get in the air. Some of the Olney/Vincennes group was heading back that afternoon, so we had a

good reason to hit the airport as soon as possible.



Bernie Fried N18XS



Mark Russell N89ER

Despite any reason I am sure Lee wouldn't have let us sit for much longer wasting precious daylight that could be spent in the air. At the airport some pilots were wiping down their planes and I noticed a new Thorp. Our total for the airfield was 18 Thorps.

This weekend isn't just about owning a Thorp, but about Thorp enthusiasts as a whole. We had owners and builders mingling. The cheeks were removed and questions started. Everyone was interested in what was under the hood. Builders were walking around taking photos of panels and engines and just about every part of a plane.

Non-builders and non-owners were asking questions about the planes and a few people were trying to find a plane to buy. A big part of the weekend is about the exchange of rides. Owners give rides to non-owners and builders alike. My father in law, Dave, told me about all the rides he got while here in previous years and now it was his time to give rides to people. Scott is a builder and he took Dave's plane out a few times. A lot of fun is had in the air and on the field, but there are also lessons and practice going on as well. This weekend has a lot of formation flying and for most this is a great chance to learn or hone their skills. This Thorp community has a lot of retired military instructors and pilots that give advice to non-military pilots on formation flying.



Central Command at KY Dam, the picnic table!



Probably the best part of the weekend was when a couple came up to me and asked me about all the planes on the airfield. I explained what was going on and the gentleman explained that he was interested in airplanes and that he flew model airplanes. He had never flown before and I mentioned that he could probably find someone to give him a ride if he was so inclined. Moments later I spotted them looking at a couple Thorps and then he was getting into a plane. I am not sure who the pilot was that took the man up into the air, but he gave him a great long ride. His wife was very nervous and I made the joke that she may have made a mistake letting her husband fly, because it would likely cost her about forty thousand dollars. Bob grabbed the lady and introduced her to the group as his new girlfriend.



Pulling the cowl, draws a crowd like ringing the dinner bell!

As the time approached noon, planes started to get ready to go to Murray for a fish fry fly-in. I started to look for Dave as he was my ride to lunch. Last I had seen him he was taxiing to send off Scott, but Scott had already left. I noticed a few people head down the taxi way, and I got up to go check. Sure enough Dave's plane was getting pushed back up the taxi way by four or five helpful guys. His engine had quit. Luckily he was amongst



knowledgeable friends and twenty five minutes later he was ready to fly.

Murray sets up a fish fry every year and they don't charge anything for it. It is all you can eat and the fish is locally caught all year. Not being a person that likes fish, you won't find much else for the main course, but the fish is good. I myself don't like fish, but I tried a few pieces and it was pretty good. The Thorps all park on their own side and it is a pretty cool sight. All 18 Thorps made it to the fly in and if you want dessert, you had better get it on your first pass because they go fast.



Stomachs full, fuel up! It's time to ...



... get an afternoon of formation training from Gary Green and Bob Highley.

There isn't any fuel on the field at Kentucky Dam so everyone fuels up at Murray. The rest of the afternoon is spent flying and socializing. A little after noon the ladies return from town and show off some good buys. The pilots continue to give rides until the sky starts to get dark. The group eats at the dinner buffet at the hotel. People with vehicles start shuttling people back to their rooms to get cleaned up and then we all meet in a private room from dinner.

After a few words, we go one table at a time to the buffet. The buffet had delicious pork and chicken. I could name all the food on the buffet, but it will have something you like and it does have a dessert bar as well. After everyone eats, there is an introduction. This is quite helpful and people get to say a little something if they want. You find out who is building, how long some people have been flying, and how much fun it is to be at this gathering. Some important business gets discussed, and thanks are given to people that played a huge part in making this gathering happen.

A new Thorp owner brought up an idea for a "spring" fly in. This idea seemed well received, but most people's idea of spring is a little different from this group's. The "spring" Fly in was scheduled for June. It is in North Carolina and should be a really fun time if it is anything like Kentucky Dam.

Sunday is the last day of the fly in and after two nights of socializing a few people get up and eat some breakfast, make reservations for their rooms for next year, and head to the field. The group packs up and starts out on their way home with long goodbyes and best wishes till the next event.



TheOlney/Vincennes group on inspection detail



N589LW off the wing of N718DR on return to M34

Looking back on the weekend at Kentucky Dam, it was a fun filled weekend for anybody who has an interest in aviation or likes to look at planes. The area is a peaceful and scenic, the food is good, and the people are probably some the nicest people you will ever meet. From the moment I arrived a shy nervous non-pilot, I felt accepted and as though I had been with the group for the last 22 years. This weekend is all about Friends, Food, Fun, and Flying, if you are in the area or able to make it, I encourage anyone to come join the fun. It isn't just for pilots or builders; it is for anyone that likes a good time with good people.

You will definitely leave Kentucky believing that

*"Life is good, but it is better with a Thorp"*

---

### **Mixture Safety Return Spring – David Read**

Kentucky Dam is one of my favorite weekends of the year. We all give and get a lot of rides and exchange an enormous amount of information, plus it is a chance to catch up with friends we may not have seen for a while. I had already made a few flights Saturday morning and just had enough fuel to escort Scott Stine out of the airspace and make a couple of passes before we all headed down to Murray KY for the annual fish fry. I fired up and proceeded to follow Scott for the moderately long taxi to depart on runway 9. About two thirds of the way down the engine simply quit. After the usual "what the ..." I checked and all controls and settings are normal. When I attempted restart the engine fired briefly but would only run for perhaps a second. Pump the throttle and it will nearly run but not quite. I know I have fuel in the tank (I had just visually checked plus I know I can trust the fuel gauge) so I am thinking maybe the main jet has plugged somehow.

By now Lee has taxied down and after a brief consultation we determine that I am going to have to push it back up to the ramp to try to find the problem. Lee went back to send some help pushing, and by the time they arrived Bernie Fried had diagnosed the problem. It turns out the same thing happened to him once, he suggested that the mixture cable had broken allowing the mixture to go all the way lean. This made perfect sense and a brief inspection proved that this was indeed the case. The mixture cable had cleanly broken in two about half an inch behind where it connected to the carburetor mixture arm. This is but one

advantage to having problems in the midst of a group of Thorp experts.



The crowd gathers

It was nearly time for us to leave to go down to Murray and we don't want to disappoint the folks there that are always so kind to us so several of the guys headed out after making sure that I would be fine. A few of the others stayed behind to offer support and advice and assist in the repair. We determined that it would be acceptable to wire the mixture arm in the full rich position. After all, we were operating at low altitudes and leaning was not necessary. As is always the case as soon as the cowl started to come off the cameras came out and everyone gathered to look inside. I did not mind at all, I still enjoy looking at how others handled the various challenges in the engine compartment.



Ahh! There it is.

Many thanks to the guys who took a chance on missing their lunch by staying with me to be sure the repair was done correctly. Special thanks to Lee who ran the other screwdriver. With two of us working it was only 25 minutes from the time we started to take the cheeks and lower cowl off until we had it back together and ready to fly. Most of that time was spent trying to get the safety wire around the arm in such a way as to hold it in place without danger of binding up the throttle, made more difficult by the fact that there is a lot of stuff in the way. I appreciate all of the good advice through the process while at the same time not one person made a discouraging remark or came close to getting in the way. In the meantime I believe a few of you got some good pictures of some of the things I did in there whether good or bad. If you are going to have a problem there is a lot to be said for having it in the middle of several of the foremost experts on your type of aircraft.



Can you hand me a ...

This is what I think happened. I had used a lawnmower type throttle cable with the solid wire center and spiral wire sheath. Either when I moved the mixture to rich before starting or when the engine shook on startup the cable broke. Thankfully the arm moved to the lean setting during taxi or else things

could have gone bad in more ways than I care to think about. Following some good advice I received that day I have since installed a spring that will pull the mixture arm to the full rich position should it happen again. I simply went to the aviation department of the local farm store and bought the lightest spring they had a couple of inches long. I hooked one end around the stop on the mixture arm and the other end on the brace that holds the end of the sheath of the mixture and throttle cables. This was just a convenient location that would pull the arm full rich without interfering with the operation of the throttle. You wouldn't want to strong of a spring or it might tend to pull the mixture rich during flight. I talked to Bernie Fried since then and he has a similar setup although I think his spring is longer than mine but it pulls at a similar angle.



Center of picture is the return spring one end on the mixture arm, the other on the control support.

The mixture cable had never operated as smoothly as I would have liked, I think largely because the clamps that held the sheath in place crimped it enough that it would drag on the center wire. Lubrication helped but not enough. This time I bought A-730 glide free control cable from Aircraft Spruce which has a polyethylene liner. This cable is extremely

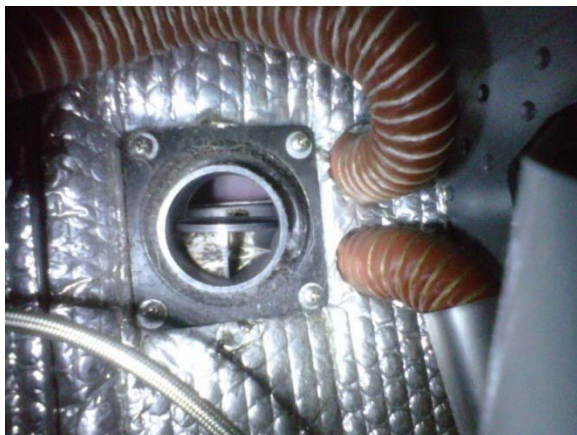
smooth but there have been some instances where the liner has apparently melted in the hot engine compartment and then seized up. For this reason Bill Williams recommends using Cable Craft. The wire core in my previous cable broke just behind the mixture arm attachment which was an AN-4 bolt with a hold drilled through the shaft. The wire gets pinched by a nut with a couple washers but is still supposed to be loose in the shaft arm so it can pivot as the arm moves. My cable was installed properly, if the bolt was tight the cable would have kinked as the arm moved. When I got home and was talking to my local A&P mechanic he said he remembered that some Grumman aircraft use the same setup and a service bulletin recommended that you replace the cable every 500 hours. I am sure it is a coincidence that my plane just rolled 500 hours. Early on in its life I had some carburetor issues and took the carburetor off and on several times. I can't remember for sure but it is quite possible that somewhere along the line I may have bent the cable wire and just straightened it back out and went on. In hindsight this would obviously cause a weak spot, leading to premature failure. Of course I will be certain not to allow that to happen to this one.

As long as I had to redo the cable I wanted to make the carburetor connection more secure so I used a spruce 05-16000 wire grip and heim type female rod end. The grip clamps on to the cable wire core on one end and has 10-32 threads on the other. I roughed up the end of the wire with sandpaper and coated it with blue loctite. Now you screw the rod end on to that with a jam nut to prevent it from unscrewing.



New "Heim" style mixture control.

The heim bearing was #10 but the mixture arm is 1/4" so I put in a bushing to make it tight, then secure with an oversized washer that prevents the arm from dropping off if the bearing fails. Use a #10 bolt and either an all metal stop nut or a castle nut, remember no nylock nuts in the engine compartment. Make sure the assembly moves freely and the mixture arm travels fully through the full range of travel.



Look closely, you'll see something odd in the lower half of the vent.

In order to run the new cable through the firewall to the throttle quadrant I took the removable portion of my floorboard off. When I stuck my head up in there I saw something in the firewall eyeball vent from

the cabin heat/cool air mixer box. At first I thought it was a nut that a mouse had carried up in there. Then as I looked closer I determined that it was a bird. A couple of months ago a friend of mine came into the hanger while I was piddling with something and commented "You hit a bird". There were several feathers stuck to the inlet lip of my air scoop. I was not aware I had hit anything. On my plane I combined the carburetor intake and cabin air intake into the same scoop. We couldn't see anything in the K&N air filter or down the cabin air duct. When I removed the vent I found only the bird head so I assume the rest of him must have gone outside of the scoop. The good news is it did not damage anything and I never smelled him either. This is not related to the bird strike I had about a month later that dented the leading edge in the center of my right outer panel. Not bad enough to affect performance but enough to be ugly.



Not a finger puppet, now that's two feathered friends N718DR has taken down!

I have put a few hours on the new installation with no complaints. Later this winter, I intend to replace the carburetor heat cable with one of these glide free cables as well.

**Spring 2011 Gathering!!!**– Scott Hinton

Just a quick note inviting anyone interested to attend the spring 2011 fly-in at Elizabeth City Regional Airport (ECG) June 10-12, 2011. I have posted to the forum lodging options; the sooner I have an idea of the number of attendees, the quicker I can lock in the prices. The airport is very unique; we are a joint use military facility, the civil ramp on the south side of the field and the largest Coast guard air facility on the north side. The airport also hosts two well -known aviation companies, radar manufacturer Telephonics Corporation, and a DRS Technologies, maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) facility specializing in C-130's. I can arrange tours of the MRO and possibly the Coast Guard air station if you think our members would enjoy it.

The field is tower controlled but don't fret. We are fortunate to have 4 very friendly and accommodating controllers who will ensure that there is plenty of opportunity to get out and do some great formation flying and I suspect upon returning that you may be instructed to "report initial for the overhead" for you fighter pilot types. Also on Saturday, we'll make plans for a fly-out to Kitty Hawk and the Wright Brothers memorial. Located just 28 miles to the southeast right on the beach, the memorial will make a great backdrop for the in-flight formation photos.

As we get closer I'll post more info and other weekend activities, to include a spouse program and meal plans. The attached photo shows our ramp and the adjacent DRS and Telephonics facilities on either end. Plenty of room for a ramp full of Thorps!



The ramp at Elizabeth City Regional Airport (KECG), let's fill it up!

**Note:** Scott has arranged a 15% Discount at the Culpepper Inn Bed and Breakfast (<http://www.culpepperinn.com>) 252-335-9235. I had a look at their website and this place looks great. In fact the entire town does!

---

**The Joys of a new Thorp Owner** – Scott Hinton

Those that I was fortunate enough to meet at Kentucky Dam know that I am the new owner of Walt and Bev Giffin's beautiful Thorp N78WG. Lee has suggested that I share my thoughts as a new owner. It's been an exciting five months, but the journey to ownership took much longer...

First, my background: I was born and raised in Dayton, Ohio. Growing up in the "birthplace of aviation" it was easy to become fascinated by flying and airplanes. I soloed one week after my sixteenth birthday, with the goal of becoming a military pilot. Exactly four weeks after my graduation from high school I left for US Army basic training followed by helicopter flight training.



Scott and his new ride N78WG

Eighteen years old throughout most of flight school, I turned 19 just before graduation and was assigned to the air cavalry of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division as a scout helicopter pilot. I upgraded to pilot-in-command while still 19. My crew chief was 18; my squadron commander liked to refer to use as his “teenage flight crew”, and always said that he would trust me with a helicopter but wouldn’t give me the keys to his car. Can’t say I blamed him. I spent 9 years flying helicopters for the Army before transferring to the US Coast Guard. Two more helicopter assignments followed before I transitioned to the C-130. After 9 years in the C-130 I retired in 2005 and now manage the Elizabeth City Regional Airport (host of the Spring 2011 Gathering of Thorps). I hold an ATP rating for both airplanes and helicopters and have managed to fly roughly 9000 hrs. The Thorp is the 5<sup>th</sup> airplane I’ve owned.

So, why a Thorp?

My most recent airplane was a 1941 Aeronca Chief. I’ve always loved the antiques, and save for one other experimental, all of my planes have been fabric covered classics. My first was a Cub; I still have seller’s remorse over that one. My current job provides plenty of opportunities to fly throughout the state to

various meetings. The Chief, while fun to fly doesn’t really have any “utility”. It better suited for flying around the airport and just looking out the window. I needed a plane that I could travel in. I have friends that loaned me their planes, but I always felt a little uncomfortable doing that. After quite a bit of research, it seemed that a well built Thorp was by far the biggest bang for the buck on the market.

When it comes to buying an experimental airplane, I bring a bit of baggage to the conversation. In May, 1999, I lost the right wing of my Bowers Flybaby at 1500ft. Thanks to my wife’s good judgment and my quick actions, I was able to use the parachute I was wearing and am still here today. Suffice to say that quality of construction was my primary concern when selecting the right plane, especially one that is plans-built. I’m fortunate to count Scott Ginn as a good friend; he and I flew helicopters together in the Army 20 years ago. Today he’s a 747-400 Standards Captain at United Airlines, and more importantly a Thorp owner. So are his Dad, his Mom, and his Brother. Their family photo is a four ship formation flight! I called Scott and said I’d appreciate it if he and his family would go out and find a Thorp that they would buy and then I’d buy it. After many calls and many planes, Scott recalled that Walt Giffin had a beautiful plane that he might consider selling. Scott called on my behalf and then phoned me with the answer. He shared that Walt would consider selling; however, it was going to be a very difficult decision for the Giffin’s and that I was not to rush them. I was told to wait for Walt to call me and that wait could be months long. At this point I must add that Les Conwell, an old neighbor and friend from Hidden Lake Airport in

Florida also provided quite a bit of advice during my Thorp search. It's always good to know the right people! Incidentally, Les gave me my first ride in a Thorp and could easily be blamed for my current condition.

Two months later Walt called. We talked; actually Walt put me through what I can only describe as a job interview. After 30 minutes of questions, he said, and I quote "I suppose you'll do". After finally meeting in person at Oshkosh, Walt agreed to sell me the Thorp.

In mid August I met Scott in Denver and we flew out together in his Thorp to Walt's home base (1V6) in Canon City, Colorado. I've flown many airplanes without a formal checkout. In some cases I'm sure it was a foolish move that I now attribute to youthful ignorance and the belief that I somehow would live forever. I'm happy to say that experience has taught me that it's much better to learn from an experienced instructor than to figure it out on my own. To that end Scott was a wealth of knowledge. I cannot even imagine trying to fly the Thorp without some *quality* dual first. The first stall was very exciting (N78WG does not have stall strips)! Checkout complete, I thanked Scott and set out on the 2 day trip to my home base in eastern North Carolina. Eight flight hours later I arrived home, after crossing two-thirds of the country at an average groundspeed of 165 knots while burning less than 7 gallons an hour. What a great plane!

In the four months since I've flown over 65 hours and have experienced just a few minor maintenance issues. The right flash tube has been replaced, a wheel pant bracket failed, I installed a trusty tailwheel rod spring and ACS tailwheel (what a difference!) and just this past weekend cold temperatures shrunk

the piston o-ring in the right brake cylinder and left a puddle of 5606 on my hangar floor. All easy stuff...

What do I think of the plane?

Walt is an incredible craftsman. He retired after 27 years as a professor of industrial engineering at The Ohio State University (Go Bucks!) and apparently had access to a very well equipped shop. N78WG has over 2500 hours on it still sports the original paint. More than one person commented on the finish at Kentucky Dam. I can assure you that the beauty of this plane is not only skin deep. The flight characteristics of the Thorp have exceeded my expectations. It is a pure joy to fly. As a retired military pilot, this plane scratches an itch that few could, and certainly no other at the going price. I'm not sure why Thorps are selling at their current price point. When you consider the price commanded by the RV's ... well, either they're over priced or Thorps are very under priced. In the end, now that I own the plane price isn't that important to me. I'm planning to fly my Thorp for a very, very long time.

---

#### **A word from Worthy Warnack – Worthy Warnack**

I bought T-18 plans from John Thorp in the early 1970s and finished N2WW in 1974. After all the sign offs and taxi tests, I enjoyed that first test flight on March 16, 1974, and flew the plane for 25 years thereafter.

In 1975 it won the "Best Home Built" award at the "Spirit of '75 Fly In" at Memphis, Tennessee. My wife and I flew N2WW to California one year to see the Mojave Air Races, to three Oshkosh annual Fly Ins, and



on countless trips around Texas. I really felt at home in my Thorp so much so that piloting it seemed almost automatic. I had a full instrument panel, and the plane was cleared for night operations. But we never "pushed" the weather and spent some "weather down time" at Racine, Wisconsin one year returning to Texas from the fly in.

The plane was equipped with a Lycoming O-320 (with 160 hp pistons), a Hartzell constant speed prop (cut to 70"), and a MA4 SPA Carburetor. I usually cruised about 145-165 indicated, but it was capable of much more.

I always thought the Thorp handled real well, and without any real surprises. The bird would fall straight away in a stall, but it really broke off and "nosed over". (Felt almost vertical). I would sum it up as a nice cross-country airplane. That's what we wanted, and what we got. It was all well worth the effort.



Worthy in front of N2WW at The Museum of Flight, Dallas, TX

However, all good things seem to end. I had a seizure in 2000, lost my physical, and that ended my power flying. The "Frontiers of Flight Museum" was opening at Love Field in Dallas, Texas. I gave them N2WW, and it is still on display there today. I'm including a picture in the museum. Building that plane

was almost therapy for me, and flying it was one of life's greatest pleasures.

Good luck to you all,

Worthy Warnack

---

### **A new Thorp hatches! NX115RX is ready to fly! - Rich Brazell**

There will be a detailed write-up on Rich's airplane in the next issue. Here's a visual taste of what you will be hearing about ...



Very well laid out panel including Composite design power panel, (note center controls)



Engine management/fuel and environmental control panel



Nice SS on the floor and full use of that Ray Allen stick grip.



Hinged Cowl cheeks and enclosed engine plenum.



Relocation of the shoulder harness attach points.

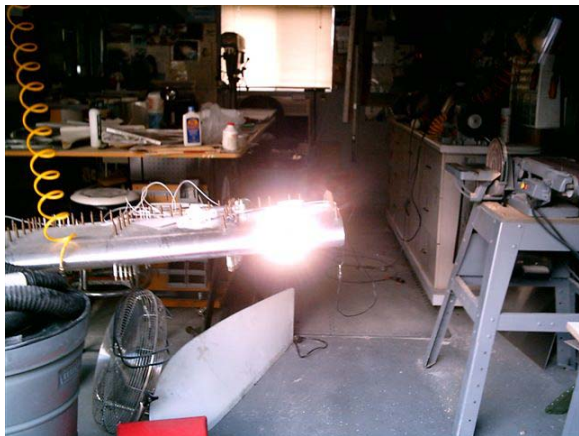


---

### Spring Gathering Raffle – Lee Walton

Any current Thorp T-18 Mutual Aid Society member who brings his T-18 to the Spring Gathering in Elizabeth City, NC will be eligible to win a free tank of gas! That's right, just show up and on Saturday night we'll pull a name out of a hat. Who said there weren't perks to being a MAS member? How's that for a stimulus program!?!

So mark June 10-12 on your calendars, make your reservations, and give your bird a good looking over. This one has the makings of one great weekend!



That's one heck of a rec light!

**FOR SALE**

---

Thorp T-18 N31BD (Bob Dial's 2<sup>nd</sup>)



LYC O-320-B2B 160HP, 450 SMOH (6/2006), TTAF 2470, Fresh Professional IMRON Paint Always Hangared, All Maintenance Records / Documents Available, Complete Drawing Set / History.

King KX-155 NAVCOM, King KT-76 Transponder and New Encoder, Garmin MAP 195, Davtron DVOR, Electric Flaps, PS Engineering Intercom

Contact: Barry Hall@ 678-290-6630 (home) / 678-429-4525 (cell) [Barry.Hall@CH2M.com](mailto:Barry.Hall@CH2M.com) \$37,500

---

Thorp T-18 N6937



0-290G converted to D. TTAF: 617, SMOH: 160 SN:844 AD prop, built in 1975. Electric Trim, Strobes, Nav-Lights, Wheel Fairings now installed. Owner is a CFI and willing to check out buyer. \$24,900

Contact : Frank Baldwin:  
[fbaldwin@troypark.com](mailto:fbaldwin@troypark.com)

---

Thorp T-18 N295RS (Richard Snelson's)



Standard T-18, 2900 TT 160 HP 0-320 341 SMOH Built by Rich Snelson completed 1992. Full Garmin panel including GNS-430, GTX-327, GMA-340. Trio Auto-pilot. AD prop. \$45,000

Contact: Tom Worth [wocon@att.net](mailto:wocon@att.net)

---

Carbon Fiber Spinners!

I have in my possession (on loan) Jim Paine's Thorp spinner mold and have started making composite Thorp spinners. There are processes out there now that can cover composites to look identical to chrome. (i.e. no more polishing, no more cracks). I will make as many as needed. \$250 plus shipping

Contact: Lee Walton [leewalton@yahoo.com](mailto:leewalton@yahoo.com) 713-303-1043

---

### Upcoming Events

03/29-04/03 Sun n Fun Lakeland, FL Note: Forum/Dinner Friday April 1 5:00PM Social Hour, Dinner at 6:00 Tent #3 in front of the Sun n Fun Museum

06/10-06/12 Spring T-18 Gathering Elizabeth City, NC Contact Scott Hinton with any questions. [shinton@ecgairport.com](mailto:shinton@ecgairport.com)

07/25-07/31 EAA AirVenture Oshkosh, WI Note: Forum/Lunch Wednesday July 27 12:00PM at the Nature Center

10/07-10/09 Fall Gathering Kentucky Dam State Park, KY (M34) Reservations: (270) 362-4271

---

A BIG Thanks to Kyle Strohl, David Read and Scott Hinton for their contributions to the inaugural "Tiger Tales" Newsletter. Obviously without their help there would not be much in here to read. Thanks Guys!

In the next issue:

**Sun n Fun 2011 Report** – Lee Walton

**First Flight Report NX115RX** – Rich Brazell

**Wing Derringer PIREP** – Wendell Green

If anyone would like to contribute to the next issue please contact me;

**Thorp T-18 Mutual Aid Society**

Lee Walton  
5000 Schuler Unit E  
Houston, TX 77007  
[thorpforum@thorp18.com](mailto:thorpforum@thorp18.com)  
713-303-1043

### Canopy Vent Control – Tom Worth



Bellcrank on canopy frame attached to push pull control that runs up to pilots left side. A lot easier than reaching behind!

---

### Scott Savor's Paint Scheme - WOW



I had to include a picture of Scott's airplane in here. I remember this airplane when Dick Cavin owned it. Trust me, it never looked this good! Hat's off to Bob Highley and Bill Williams for the rebuild and Scott Savor for picking that paint scheme. I may have to copy you on my next project Scott, she looks GREAT!