



Southern Navion Air Group



Newsletter

DECEMBER 2011

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

The holiday season is a time for us to reconnect with our families. Thanksgiving and Christmas are when we get together with our loved ones and celebrate the precious gift of life and salvation and to reflect together on times past. Wanda and I will be shopping for our Christmas tree this weekend and will be getting our home decorated for another season of cheer. As we do so we will keep each of you in our thoughts and hope that everyone has a happy Christmas season this year.

The holiday season also presents a lull in our SNAG activities. This year we have about four months between the fall fly in at Defuniak Springs and our season opener at Shadetree. While you get your Navion ready for another flying season remember that our hangar is always open for visiting SNAG members. If you need somewhere to go or you find yourself near Statesboro stop by and say hello.

Merry Christmas

- Rusty Herrington

DOES THIS LOOK FAMILIAR?



Robert's "Project Plane" on the trailer. Maybe he'll actually work on it this winter!

-- Susan Holmes

LESSONS LEARNED FROM A TRACTOR SEAT WINNER

ALRIGHT...OK...The tractor-seat award has been given and you've all had your laughs at my expense. I'm down with that. BUT I do want to share the "behind the scenes" facts of my recent electrical failure experience so that someone out there might learn from my mistake. I apologize in advance for those of you that already know this stuff- might be pretty basic, but if it saves someone pain, anguish or money then it's worth printing. It starts out like all good stories:

"SO THERE I WAS" Susan and I had flown down to beautiful Ledbetter, TX to celebrate my dad's birthday. It was the end of August and you may recall, it was hotter-n-hell in central Texas. We landed at 11 a.m. and the needle was already pushing 100 degrees. We quickly pushed the plane under the transient aircraft metal roof shade and in our hurry to get into the air conditioning, Susan started tossing our stuff down and slid the canopy closed. (First Mistake) I always run a quick post-landing checklist and check switch settings, but in my rush to cool down, I just grabbed our stuff and bolted inside. We enjoyed a wonderful day of fun, food and fellowship with my dad, returning to the airport at 10:30p.m. As I said good-bye, Susan climbed up to unlock the canopy, turned to me and said "Lee, why are these lights on?" Well, you all know why, don't you: I failed to kill master power so for the past 11 hours, my gyro had been happily spinning at 10,000RPM and the main buss was hot for anything else that was powered on. Crossing my fingers, I primed the electric fuel pump and applied power to the starter- yep, got about 6" of travel on the prop and she was dead. We were in a hurry, of course, so instead of doing the smart thing and pulling the battery for an overnight charge (would have been easy, but Susan had early Sunday School duties, so we needed to get home) so we elected to try jump-starting the 12V battery off my dad's pickup. (Second Mistake) Since we were in a hurry I just charged up the battery for ten minutes and started the plane (worked just fine), and disconnected the cables while Susan held the brakes. My dad pulled his truck out of the way and we taxied out and took off just fine. Leveling off at 4,500' around 11:30 p.m. I noticed a couple of things immediately weren't right- the autopilot altitude was cycling up and down (never did that before) and the amp/volt meter was flashing "discharge" with a -45 amps showing. Figured it was just a really low battery causing all this, so flew home with minimal lighting. Landing back at Temple around midnight with no landing lights was not fun but also not bad since the airport is well-lit. I tucked the plane away and put the battery on a trickle charger where it remained all week getting good and charged.

We were set to take off around 3 the following Friday to head up to Steve and Lita Ware's place at Country Air Estates, but as usual work got in the way and we didn't get off the ground until after 5 p.m. Complicating matters, we leveled off into a 35 knot headwind (remember the tropical storm?), making the 2.5 hour trip more like 3+ hours. Not long after level off, I looked over and noticed that the volt meter was flashing discharge and showing -11 amps... s__t! At this point I started "shedding electrical load", a fancy term meaning turning off all unnecessary electrical equipment to make the battery last as long as possible (maybe the only smart thing I did during this little adventure) Autopilot- off, all lights-off, radio #2-off. We flew like this for about 2.5 hours and all was fine except that with the delayed takeoff and the headwind, we were now going to arrive in AR at around dusk approaching min. fuel. Of course, I didn't want to land and take on fuel because I feared the battery would be too weak to restart the engine, so we pressed on toward Country Air. Throughout the flight, I was watching the volt meter go from 12.8V to 12V to 11.5V and approaching Little Rock it was at 11V. My AWESOME copilot & navigator, Susan, meanwhile was using both the Garmin 496 and our new iPad with Foreflight to keep me updated on emergency divert airfields and we decided not to risk going into Country Air Estates with daylight quickly evaporating.

Susan entered 4M3 Carlisle Muni into both portable units and I entered it into my panel GNS480. As we passed abeam KLIT, I glanced over at the voltmeter and saw that it registered 10.5 volts, then about 10 seconds later, the entire plane went dark, but my trusty IO520bb kept turning. Great I thought, what else could go wrong, so I looked out at the passing countryside and noticed a thin layer of ground fog starting to form.

LESSONS LEARNED CON'T

Fortunately it never got any worse but as we approached Carlisle, it suddenly dawned on me that without any radios, I couldn't activate the pilot controlled lighting. We found the airport using its rotating beacon and I had just enough light left to distinguish the runway (it was the concrete without cars driving on it). Throughout the weekend, our fellow SNAGers and the local A&P all offered up their sage advice on what might be the problem. We charged up the battery to a full charge and flew home on Sunday with a 30 knot tailwind and nothing but the no. 1 radio turned on, plus J.T. McMahon's loaner hand-held radio. We landed with plenty of juice remaining in the battery and took the plane straight over to the local shop.

Long story short: As they replaced each item in the power pipeline, they uncovered the next non-working component. Turns out I fried the alternator, the voltage regulator and a \$150, 60amp master circuit breaker (prevents a "runaway alternator" from cooking your entire avionics system), so my quickie jump start cost me \$1,000 and a pair of underwear. In discussing this with the A&P's it turns out this could all have been avoided if I had done one simple thing... when we jump started the engine, you turn the master power on, but keep the alternator switch off, thus isolating the charging circuit. At least in theory this would have kept the power surge from frying my entire charging system. Fortunately all ended safely, but it could have been much worse, so learn from my mistakes: **1) use your checklist**, 2) always turn off your master power, 3) avoid jump starts but if you have to, 4) isolate your alternator switch if jumping, 5) don't paint yourself into a corner: we had- no daylight, no electricians, low fuel, no backup radio and an unfamiliar field area. This event is proof that God looks after fools and idiots!

-Lee Holmes

MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

Please help us keep updated. I want to send out an updated membership roster to every member in January! I have had several requests for a complete membership roster, so you need to make sure all your information is current.

Please drop a note to me when you send in your dues if you have not done so at this time. You are also welcome to send any changes or updates via email to susaneholmes@sbcglobal.net.

The membership roster includes the following information:

- Name – first, last & nick name
- Spouse's name
- Current mailing address
- Current email address (if you have one)
- Navion tail number (if you have one)
- Home phone number
- Cellular phone number



How do you know if your dues are paid? Check your mailing label. At the bottom right there's a Membership line. If it says "Owe Dues", you can send me a check. For you email newsletter recipients...Jeffrey Davis, Paul Fleming, Robert Gaines and Dan Smith are paid up. The rest of us need to send in our \$20.00

-- Susan Holmes



Merry
Christmas 

SHADE TREE FLY-IN
SHADE TREE AIRPORT (MS82)
MARCH 9-11, 2012

Shade Tree is located 2 miles west of Lyman, MS. Make those reservations now! Ramada Inn at 228-868-8200. Tell them you are with SNAG. If you have not been to a Shade Tree fly-in you are in for a treat. Danny Miller sure knows how to roll out the red carpet for our Navions! Check out Shade Tree's website, there are lots of Navion pictures and we are on their calendar of events... www.shadetreeairport.com.

We have a hotel block reserved It's at the Ramada in Gulfport. Rate is \$65.00 plus tax. Make your reservations under SNAG at 228-868-8200.

If you have any questions or want to talk about plans, contact the Butlers...
home: 601-798-5755, Barbara cell: 228-342-2489, Al cell: 228-342-5573.

MEMBER NEWS

You have right at 3 months to get your planes all spiffy for the next fly-in season! With the exception of Robert's "kit plane", I expect we'll all get some serious maintenance done in the hangars this winter.

One of the best parts about SNAG fly-ins are the stories we swap. Do you have an interesting story to share about a trip, a repair, rebuilding stories, or anything involving your Navion? Send it in to the secretary, susaneholmes@sbcglobal.net. We want to hear from you!



KEEP THOSE NAVIONS FLYING!

SNAG NEWSLETTER/DECEMBER 2011
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