



## Words to Remember

*Next time you break the surly  
bonds*

*And dance on sunlit skies*

*Consider those who put you  
there*

*And thank the maintenance  
guys*

-Dave Ray

*'Tis likely enough that there  
may be means invented of  
journeying to the moon; and  
how happy they shall be that  
are first successful in this  
attempt.*

Dr. John Wilkins, 1640

## Liar's Club

*There I was; fog was so thick I  
couldn't see the instruments.*

*'Only way I knew I was in-  
verted was my flying medals  
were in my eyes. But I knew I  
was really in trouble, when the  
tower called me and told me to  
climb and maintain field eleva-  
tion.*

*The male pilot is a confused soul  
who talks about women when  
he's flying and about flying  
when he's with a woman.*

From "Slipping the Surly Bonds"  
Dave English

## "I WANT TO BUILD MY OWN AIRCRAFT!"

Many of us have made this statement. Particularly when we are at an airport where homebuilts (amateur-built aircraft) are predominant. If you've been to AirVenture, Oshkosh, you, no doubt, felt carried away with the excitement of the participants, and the plethora of beautifully crafted flying machines. In fact, it's all so overwhelming, that we as individuals don't know where to start, or even if we are in the 'ball game' with our dreams.



While working the Builder's Education 'Porch' at Oshkosh a few years ago, a star-struck wannabee-builder stopped by and stated that he was going to build his own aircraft. When I asked him if he had reached a decision about which of the many homebuilt types to choose from, he said, "It will either be a Lancair, or a Kitfox." Perhaps naïve, but doesn't that resonate with us all? In my building career, I've wanted to build a Bede-5, a Vari EZ, a Kitfox, a Pietenpol, and an RV. (Those are only the serious ones!)

In addition, we see the incredible expansion of the amateur-built aircraft types, performances and craftsmanship, and we are convinced that this hobby belongs to others; we just couldn't fit in! "How could I possibly gain all that required information, and learn all those skills to accomplish such a huge, daunting, project?"



I believe one thing that is needed, is a simple, clear, and structured pathway for the new homebuilder to be guided through the many questions, problems and con-

cerns. To get him/her started, to encourage him/her through the building stages, to simplify or reduce the regulatory issues to meaningful steps, and to help that all-illusory completion of the project become visible, and then real.

A few weeks ago, I was asked by a former 'Sheet Metal Basics' student, "When do I need to send in my 'Letter of Intent' to the authorities?" I asked him where he was at with his RV-8, and he stated that he had the empennage, and the wings completed and was working on his fuselage. I asked him if any of his structure was closed up, and he said all of it with the exception of the fuselage. In Canada, we require a pre-cover inspection before closing up any structure! He could have saved himself a lot of grief if he would have had a simple structured guide to follow.

It is not difficult to build your own aircraft. It does take commitment and patience, and a little mentoring is certainly helpful.



In the next columns, I propose to develop just such a guide for Canadian builders. This is not aimed at the accomplished 'repeat-offender' builder, but at the new entry candidate. I want to explore the issues that will confront the builder. I want to consider the choices available, the skill and learning requirements, the regulatory issues, (when and where they apply), the facilities, the tools, the family support, the mentoring and help available, and the role that all of us can play in this incredible hobby and vocation.

If you are one of those persons, who have always thought that it would be really neat to build your own aircraft, and are serious enough to want to explore this idea further, get started by getting a copy of the "EAA's Canadian Homebuilt Aircraft Buyer's Checklist", available from EAA's Technical Department, at: [www.eaa.org](http://www.eaa.org). Or contact me at [CGYRV@yahoo.com](mailto:CGYRV@yahoo.com), and I'll forward a copy to you.

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