William Buckley’s first cross-country report 6-28-17

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Not an original thought, I know, but one of my favorite repeated threads on the email list has always been the trip reports. Love/Hate really. I loved hearing the tales of places visited and canard performance but I hated that I wasn't one of the cool kids yet. Finally I can contribute some trip reports.

I made the first flight for my Cozy Mk4 on 3/14/17 and by 4/11/17 I had completed all my Phase 1 test cards in 40.3 flight hours. Plenty of good weather at the time. Learned a bunch, spent some time on the troubleshooting mobius strip a few times, cursed at flight school Cessnas for space shuttle landing patterns, and had a blast. The day after I made the Phase II logbook entry I stayed up past my bed time and got night current. The next Saturday I loaded up with my wife and 2 kids and escaped my Phase I test area to the west. From Palatka, FL (28J) that puts you on the Gulf coast real quick. We flew down the coast to Apalachicola (KAAF). Good airport and the town is a great destination. The airport has 3 runways - all of them are over 5000 feet long. No cross wind landings are allowed there. The FBO service is top notch. The courtesy car was parked next to the Cozy, doors open, with the AC blasting before I had a chance to ask. Lickety split, the linemen had me refueled and armed with directions to their recommended restaurant (Up The Creek Raw Bar). They were right about the restaurant. Fresh oysters (Apalachicola is famous for its oysters) cooked any way you can imagine or raw. A nice downtown with small shops, restaurants, and pubs. We'll have to go back for a RON to take full advantage. They also had a classic car show going on that day. After eating I called the FBO to ask if they needed the courtesy car back. They said no - not busy at the airport so feel free to stay in town for a bit. Its a good get away destination that is not overrun by the typical Florida tourist crowd. Please add Apalachicola to your list of places to visit.

Fast forward a few weeks and breezing past boring details - we decided to sell our house and move to Texas. With buyers under contract and a closing date set I reserved a moving truck and set into motion a crazy logistical plan to get the family+cat, wife's car, my pickup, household goods, camping trailer, our sanity and the Cozy from Florida to Texas. 2 days before this master plan was to begin I received an email (on a Sunday) from a sales rep in a partner company with the "urgent" need for me to visit a potential customer in West Virginia. No problem - Cozy to the rescue. On that Tuesday I took off from Palatka, FL at 5:30am and was at an 11am meeting in northern West Virginia. Cozy wins. Nice town if you have absolutely zero need for a restaurant, hotel, or rental car. They do have an airport though. Go figure. Weather gave me a fit getting up there. I haven't spent the money for IFR avionics yet (see the recent thread on IFR equipment costs). Sucks being only VFR equipped. To get home I flew east 100 miles and then SE to the North Carolina coast. Thanks to Cozy performance I was able to do an end run around the leading edge of the IFR weather and bask in the warm glow of blue skies all the way back to FL. Cozy wins again. I logged 9.2 hours of flight time that day. I haven't flown that much in one day since the US Navy was paying my fuel bills.

The next morning I mounted the re-attack on our relocation plan and flew from the east coast of Florida to the airport nearest to my parents' home in western Louisiana, Leesville (L39). I've made that miserably long drive far too many times over the last 20 years. 12-13 hours of brain numbing boredom known as interstate 10 & 12 & 10 (again). Flying solo with a full bag of gas, the Cozy knocked it out in 4+10 with headwinds all the way. (Sidenote: I'm thinking of changing my callsign to "Headwinds". I've had headwinds on every long Cozy flight so far. Even on the flight to/from West Virginia on the same day - I had headwinds both ways. What the hell?). I drove my dad's pickup (3/4 ton with trailer brakes) back to FL and drug our camper back to Louisiana for temporary storage. You got me again interstate 10 and 12, you bastards. Jumped in the Cozy and flew up to Henderson, TX (KRFI), picked up a rental car and spent 2 days looking for a rental house. Locked down a house and flew back to Palatka FL. Again weather made me work hard and twice I spent a few minutes at 13,500 to clear a line of buildups. At one point the Jacksonville Center controller gave me a weather warning for buildups with heavy precip at my 11 and 1 o'clock. With as much humility as I could fake, I replied, "Visual. I'm above them". Cozy wins again.

Fast forward a few weeks again and the 2 day cross-country migration west with the kids, cat, car, and moving truck full of our junk...err...belongings, was done. Curse you interstate 10, Mississippi highways, and now, interstate 20! (Second sidenote: I'm changing my wife's callsign to "Badass" after pulling off this pack-up/truck load out/1100 mile drive/unpack.) We've done several moves over the years but this one was a doozy. Once I had a chance to snag some hangar space in Texas I took the airline penalty ride back to Florida. I gave the Cozy a couple of check out flights locally after having it parked for almost a month. On the first flight I took off in the hottest weather to date for my plane. I was delayed at the holdshort for flight school Cessnas (as usual) with 99 degrees on the OAT. On takeoff the oil temp rose to 209 and the CHT's got up to 420 in the climbout. I pulled the throttle to 2350 rpm passing 500ft AGL and the CHT's settled down quickly and stabilized in the 370's in the partial power climb. Oil temp took a little longer to cool but started coming down. At some point in the not too distant future I'm going to try a few things to see if I can get a little better airflow to the oil cooler (mounted on the top of the firewall). Also, I've still got the 1 wire Dynon oil temp probe. Maybe its lying. The 2nd check out flight I did the next day was a local demo flight with my RV4 buddy at his home field in St Augustine (KSGJ). That was his first canard flight.

A day later, I was west bound again in the Cozy in smooth VFR weather but with (you guessed it) headwinds all the way to Texas. I got a few nice aerial shots of Mobile Bay, the Pearl River (Louisiana/Mississippi border at the "tip of the boot"), the Mississippi River, and my High School in my home town. I managed to score a temporary hangar for a few days until a T hangar becomes available at another airport next week. Cozy wins again. My truck is still orphaned back in Florida but one more series of unnecessarily complicated steps will get it back in my driveway and restore my family to our accustomed position perfectly balanced directly on the median of US households with 2 adults, 2 kids, 1 pet, and 2 automobiles.

Sitting parked right now my Cozy has 77.0 Total Time and the only thing that would make me happier would be 1) Improve the canopy weather seal (meaning, somewhat better than a colander), 2) buy a Garmin 430W (ungodly expensive and Marc's unit cost calculation of $700 per approach didn't help), 3) Fly more.

Keep sanding girls and boys. Keep sanding.

William Buckley

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