

## George Graham's Mazda EZ

**G**eorge Graham's EZ is a true homebuilt if there ever was one! He bought building instructions for the Long-EZ, E-Racer, Cozy and Velocity, then picked the parts of each he liked best to scratch-build his two-place, side-by-side canard aircraft he simply calls an EZ. He built the airframe parts in a 9' x 12' bedroom in his home in Tonawanda, NY, relying heavily on building tips gleaned from his friend, VariEze builder Nigel Field of Embrun, Ontario.

"Nigel was my guru throughout the project. Every question I ever had, he had the answer - even how to make propellers."

One of the ideas was "hard shelling" the composite structure - applying fill and getting the foam perfectly smooth **before** applying the glass cloth.

On the advice of his stepson, a Memphis, TN auto mechanic, George converted a 1985 Mazda RX-7 rotary engine to power his EZ. Among his

innovations were the use of a five-speed automobile transmission as his propeller reduction unit. He retained only second gear, which has a ratio of 2.2 to 1. With a 66" x 75" wood propeller he carved himself, the engine will produce 2,300 static rpm and he normally cruises at 2,500 rpm. He retained the Mazda's electronic dual ignition, but eliminated its electronic fuel injection in favor of his own homemade intake manifold and an old Dodge truck carburetor.

The engine has thus far proven to be as bulletproof as his stepson said it would be. George and his wife, Fran, had flown the airplane 127 hours over the previous eight months when they landed at Oshkosh this summer, including trips all over the Eastern U. S.

The EZ came out weighing 940 pounds empty. Gross is 1,800 pounds. George cruises it at 180 mph and lands at about 75.

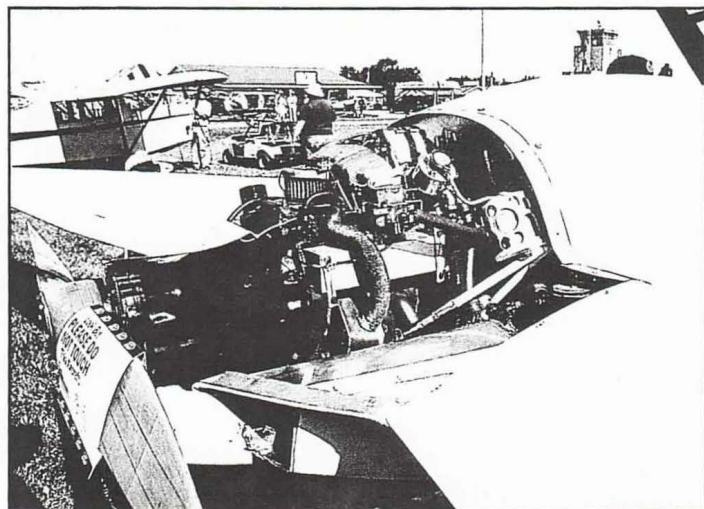
Building an airplane is just the lat-

est adventure in George Graham's multifaceted career. He started building his first hotrod when he was 13 and began racing it when he reached 16. He joined the Air Force in 1965, became an aircraft mechanic and ended up in Vietnam before mustering out four years later. After his return to civilian life, he

bought a sawmill and operated it for a time, but eventually transitioned into the construction business, building schools, super markets, shopping centers, etc. After a brief sojourn as car builder/crew chief for a championship SCCA race car team, he tired of all the travel, returned home to Buffalo and got into the computer business. He began as a salesman and, later, the manager of a Computerland store, working for free just to learn about computers, then went into his own software business. He sold that company to build his airplane . . . and who knows what he will tackle next!

George certainly is unafraid of challenge. When he began building his EZ, he was not yet a pilot. He soloed a friend's airplane during the four year construction period and built up some solo time, then took an intensive eight day, 21 hour course at a flying school in Florida to get his Private license in time to test fly his EZ!

**George Graham (EAA 454272) of Tonawanda, NY.**



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