

2016 MEFI EXPERIMENTER AWARD WINNERS

The Experimenter Awards are about celebrating the great work that everybody does and making sure that the teams behind the scenes get recognized for the awesome work that they do. – Andrew Findlay

BEST DESIGN

Kevin Eldridge of Lancair with the first full authority digital engine control (FADEC) on a piston-driven iE2 Lycoming IO-540 engine on the Lancair Evolution demonstrator.



Craig Henry and Joe Coraggio, Best Build, modified Long-EZ, aka Garaggio-EZ.

BEST BUILD

Joe Coraggio modified a stock Long-EZ with the goal of racing in the 2016 AirVenture Cup. He made about 30 modifications to the plane to make it as fast as possible, the most noticeable being the blended winglet. He created a radius between the horizontal and vertical sections in an effort to reduce intersection drag.

Justin described the results as “freaking beautiful.”



Adam Burch and Rian Johnson, Best Test, Van's Aircraft RV-14.

BEST TEST

Rian Johnson, EAA 600116, of Van's Aircraft. The new RV-14 had some issues after initial flight testing. In true homebuilder fashion, a solution was found using balsa wood from a hobby store. A reverse trailing wedge modification to the elevator fixed the problems. Rian explained, “Control surface design is somewhat like black magic. It's all about the little tweaks and knowing how to tailor things.”

BEST EFFORT

Tom Siegler, EAA 435722, is restoring a Cosmic Wind and brought his project to Mojave in a U-Haul trailer. The Best Effort award goes to the person who traveled the farthest, pushed the hardest to get something done in time and didn't quite make it, or put in the most effort to be there.



Andrew Findlay of One Moment Air Racing Team, Experimenter of the Year, describing mods to his Lancair Super Legacy, Race 30.

EXPERIMENTER OF THE YEAR:

Andrew Findlay, EAA 1034372, of One Moment Air Racing Team, Lancair Super Legacy Race 30, for three project modifications. The Blackworks group at McCauley designed a new propeller specifically for Reno air racing. Other mods were a new air intake design made in part with 3-D printed parts wrapped in carbon fiber, and a fuel system modification allowing large fuel flows at reasonable fuel pressure.

“Control surface design is somewhat like black magic. It's all about the little tweaks and knowing how to tailor things.” – Rian Johnson

MAKING AVIATION COOL AGAIN

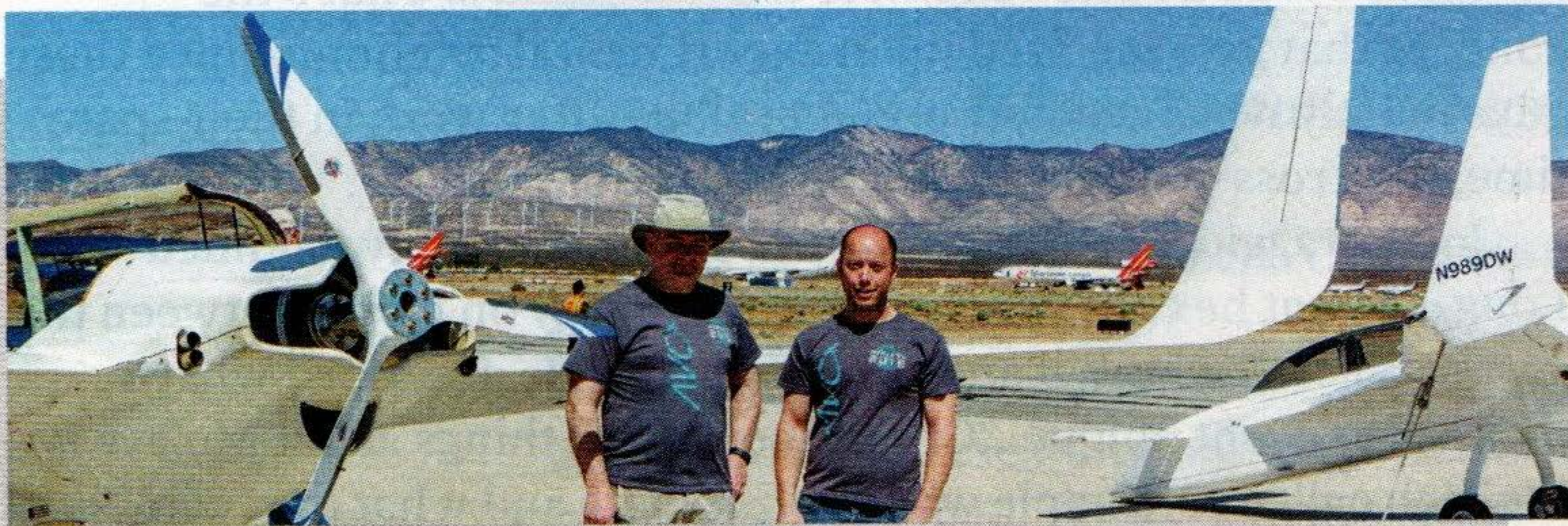
Andrew described Mojave as, “A cool way to celebrate and share all the awesome stuff that is going on in aviation. Some racers are secretive and don't share anything. The way I see it, the faster I go and the faster everybody goes, it's good for the sport. At the end of the day, nobody is making money racing airplanes; we're just out there having a good time. If we can push each other to do better, that's what it's all about.” The energy at the Mojave Experimental Fly-In is electric. Words like “cool” and “awesome” are used repeatedly with hand-waving excitement. Andrew pointed out, “In general aviation we always ask how do we get more people involved, how do we get young people excited, how do we share aviation with more people. We do it at EAA, Reno, and Mojave. There is still a lot of really cool stuff going on. Any way we can share that is good.” Elliot's incandescent energy and enthusiasm is contagious. He proclaimed, “I didn't start this event because I wanted to be an event planner, but because I wanted to make it easier to be a homebuilder. I wanted to give you a reason to come here and meet these guys. How could you not get excited about this?”

The next Mojave Experimental Fly-In will be held April 14-16, 2017. **EAA**

Beth E. Stanton is a competition aerobatic pilot and president of Northern California Chapter 38 of the International Aerobatic Club. She can be reached at bethestanton@gmail.com.

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