



To Set The Record Straight

Bruce & Bonnie Tiftt (OR) - After reading a recent newsletter analysis (not CSA) of the accident that took the lives of our dear friends, Wes and Millie Gardner we felt we needed to respond and set the record straight. We were disturbed, disheartened, and angry that the article inferred that the accident was the result of Wes installing inferior "non-aircraft" parts on his newly completed E-Racer, and that he ultimately failed to "fly the airplane" during an emergency.

Those of us who built and flew with Wes and Millie, over the past 15 years, know this is totally absurd. It is an insult to Wes' memory to allow those of you who were not fortunate enough to know this outstanding man to think that could be the case. Wes was a meticulous builder, and a cautious, cool headed, proficient pilot. He had one of the fastest Vari-Ezes going and competed in and won many, many races. He logged well over 1,000 hours in his Vari-Eze and during his miles of travels encountered several emergency situations which he handled like the professional we all know he was.

The "non-aircraft" part mentioned in the article was a ball joint assembly. This part is used on the Grumman Tiger, a certified aircraft, and can be ordered from Wick's Aircraft. It is not an automotive part. We had the same assembly on our Long-EZ, but have since replaced it with a locking-type ball joint provided by Ellison. The only "non-aircraft" part was a motorcycle twist grip throttle which is used on the prototype E-Racer. We tried to talk Wes out of using it, but he said he liked it and it was his decision and his airplane. It was suggested, in that newsletter analysis, that the motorcycle twist grip throttle on the control stick was removed in flight after the

emergency was in progress to try to fix it and while doing this, Wes failed to control the airplane. That doesn't sound like the Wes Gardner we knew!!

Several EZ builder/pilots thoroughly investigated the accident site and it is their conclusion that the E-Racer developed engine problems on take-off, that Wes was "flying the airplane" for an emergency landing but failed to see power lines, that the left main landing gear hit the lines and the airplane was thrown in a left wing-down attitude when it contacted the ground. It then cart wheeled and was destroyed by fire. There are some situations that not even the most skillful pilot can save.

We were heartsick to lose such wonderful people as Wes and Millie and won't allow Wes' memory to be tainted by this hypothetical scenario as described in that newsletter analysis.

We will never definitely know what happened during this tragic accident, but we are certain it was not lack of builder expertise nor was it any lack of proficiency on the part of the pilot.

This is for you Wes and Millie -
We miss you!

**1500 hours of
EZ Experience**

Bruce Tiftt (OR) - In the first 1500 hours flying (Ezes & LONGs) I've had 15 mag failures, coils-points-gears you name it, both Slick and Bendix. I then put on one ignition from an outfit called Cavu Products in Ontario, Canada (no longer in business). This one mounted in a mag hole, is gear driven but had no spark advance. About a year later I put on one of Jeff Rose's (Electroair) ignitions with spark advance, and I have not had to do a thing to either to date. I did put in, with Jeff's help, a second battery (motorcycle) with a switch on the

panel to switch batteries, in case of main battery failure. I have run 1.5 hours on the little battery with everything on, just testing and it worked very well. I'm very happy to get out of the 1940s and into the 1990s as far as ignition systems go.

The next thing to get rid of - after burning one piston on the way to the **KCGIG** and sucking an intake valve on another trip from plugged injectors, and I have two filters - was my Bendix fuel injection. I put on a reliable 4.5 Ellison throttle body injector. Not only did it even up the color on my exhaust pipes, but I picked up about 100 RPM. It burns a little more fuel at low altitude, but I'm going faster now. The changes from mags to electronic ignitions and from plugged injectors to the Ellison was well worth the extra effort for greater peace of mind. The engine is smoother running and starts "EZ", even on hot starts.

When you have an electronic ignition on your bird you get out cheap on spark plugs. I pay about \$7.00 for four. The plugs I use on my O-360 take a 1" socket. On the top plug I had to trim out some of the fins to get clearance around the spark plug hole to make the socket fit. There are two plugs I have tried and I get no noise in the radio or GPS. One is a snowmobile plug. It's an NGK A-8 and the other is an AUTOLITE-2695, both available at your local auto parts store. Both plugs have a nice flat area for the gasket and are the right heat range. I set my plugs at .040" gap and it works very well for me.

Have Fun and Fly Safely

Improved Fuel Cap O-rings

Norm Dodge (AZ) - The UD3 fuel caps, sold through Spruce Aircraft are made by Usher Enterprises of Cornelius, Oregon (503) 647-0015.

Usher told me there is an improved O-ring available for the cap. This Vitron # 75 is apparently sold through automotive stores like NAPA.