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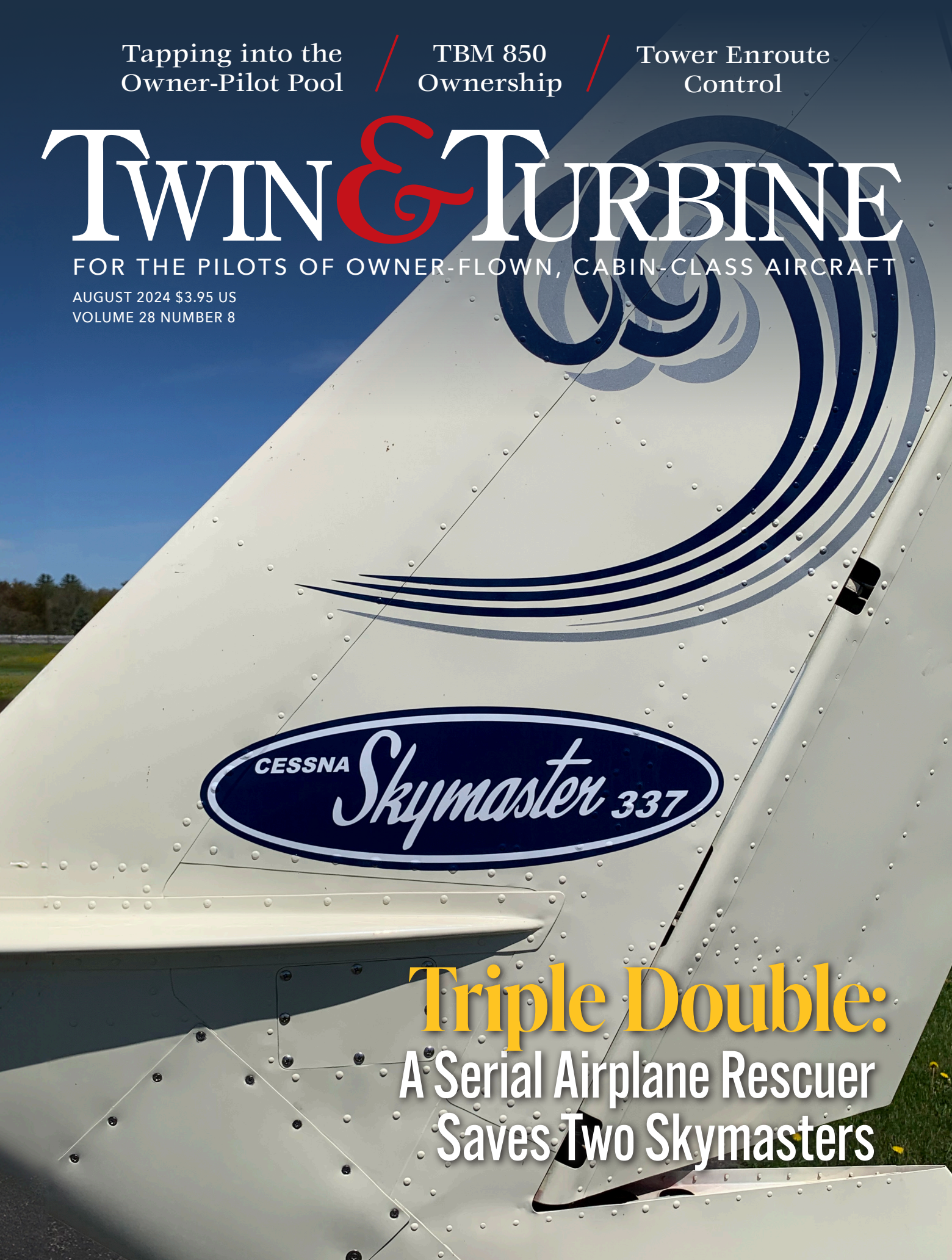

Triple Double:
A Serial Airplane Rescuer Saves Two Skymasters

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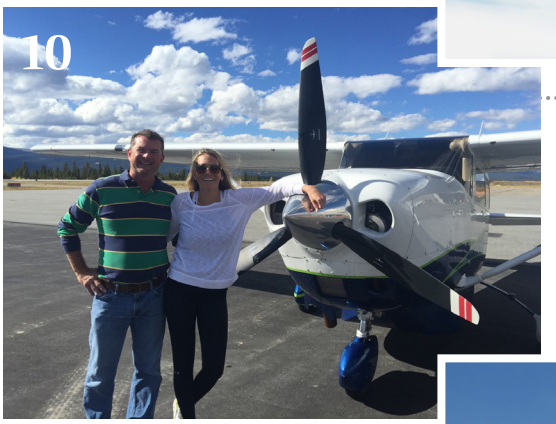

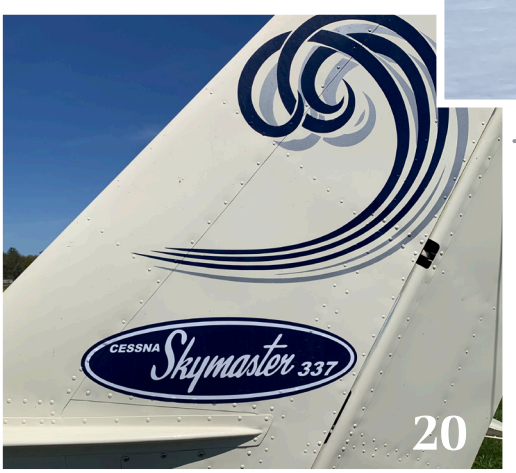

COVER PHOTO:
The left vertical stabilizer of N2344S sports a retro logo. [Matthew McDaniel]

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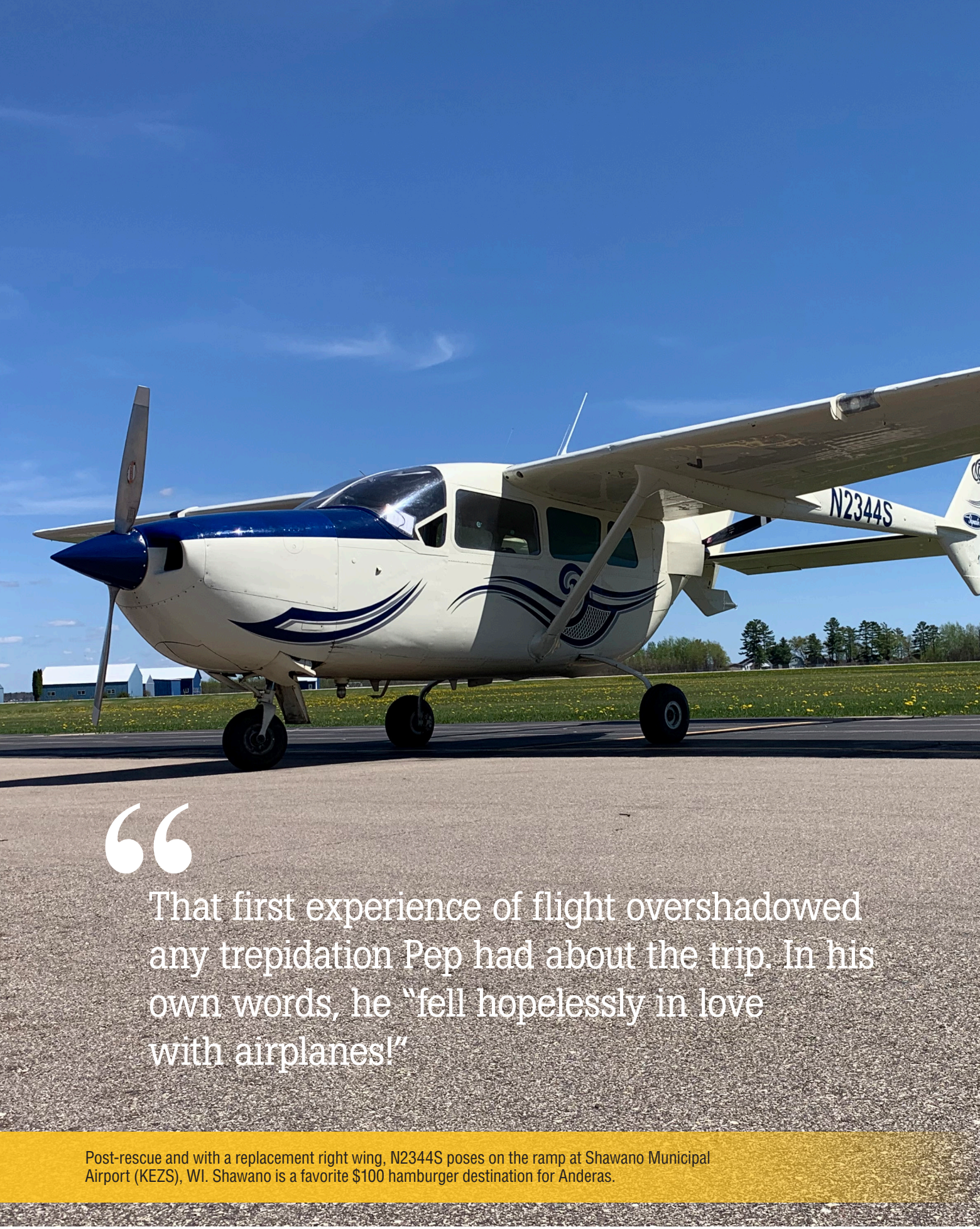
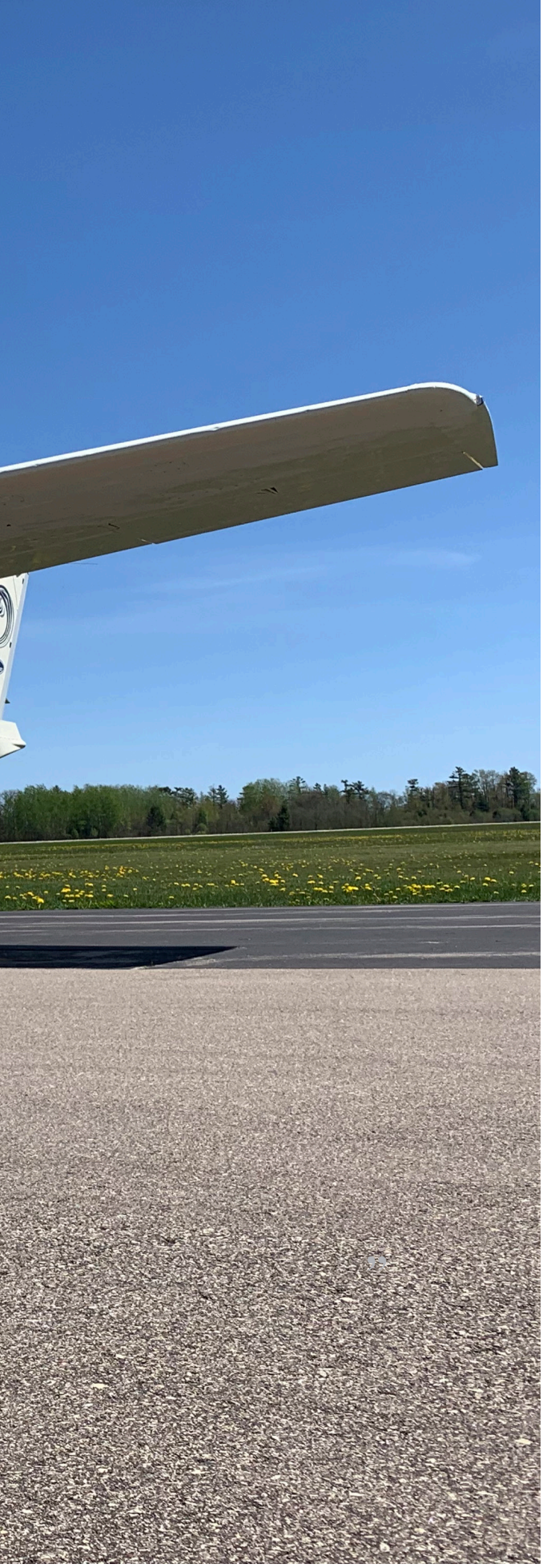


> That first experience of flight overshadowed any trepidation Pep had about the trip. In his own words, he "fell hopelessly in love with airplanes!"

Post-rescue and with a replacement right wing, N2344S poses on the ramp at Shawano Municipal Airport (KEZS), WI. Shawano is a favorite $100 hamburger destination for Anderas.



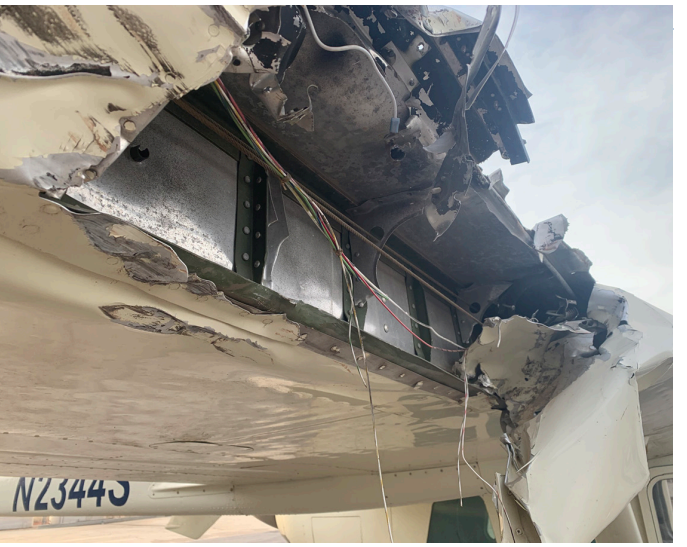
Triple Double:

A Serial Airplane Rescuer Saves Two Skymasters

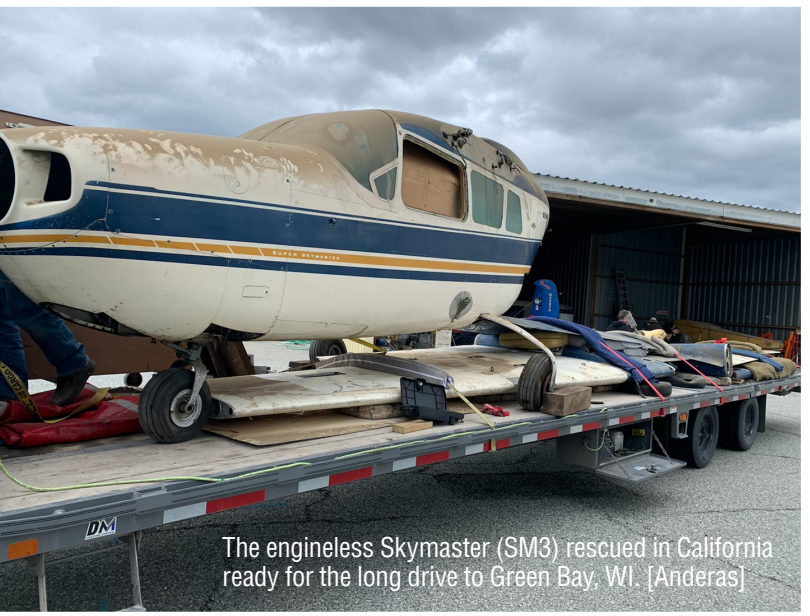
by **Matthew McDaniel**

The story is as old as the art of piloting. That first encounter with aviation which sets into motion a lifetime of aeronautical pursuits. For Dr. Per Anderas (known to his friends as "Pepe" or simply "Pep"), that encounter happened at the tender age of six. He and his older sister (age 8) were born in Chile to Swedish parents but were raised in Peru (where their parents were missionaries). Wanting a good education for their children, Per's parents put them into a Beech 18 in the jungles of Peru and sent them off to a distant boarding school where they would join their two older sisters. That first experience of flight overshadowed any trepidation Pep had about the trip. In his own words, he "fell hopelessly in love with airplanes!"

A dozen years later (at age 18), Per's father gave him $80 and bought him a one-way ticket to the U.S.A., rationalizing that Per had attended an American boarding school and that the U.S. was closer than Sweden. Through hard work and no small amount of luck, he found his way into college in Chicago without having ever officially graduated high school. From there, he got a medical degree from Northwestern and completed his residency in Milwaukee, WI. Soon, he moved to Green Bay, where he spent his career as a vascular surgeon. He was part of a group of doctors who formed the BayCare Clinic, acting as its vice president for a time and retiring in 2013. He says the highlight of his career was "Signing a $100 Million loan to build a new hospital." Today, that hospital remains the largest physician-owner specialty-care clinic in the northern Wisconsin and Michigan Upper Peninsula region.



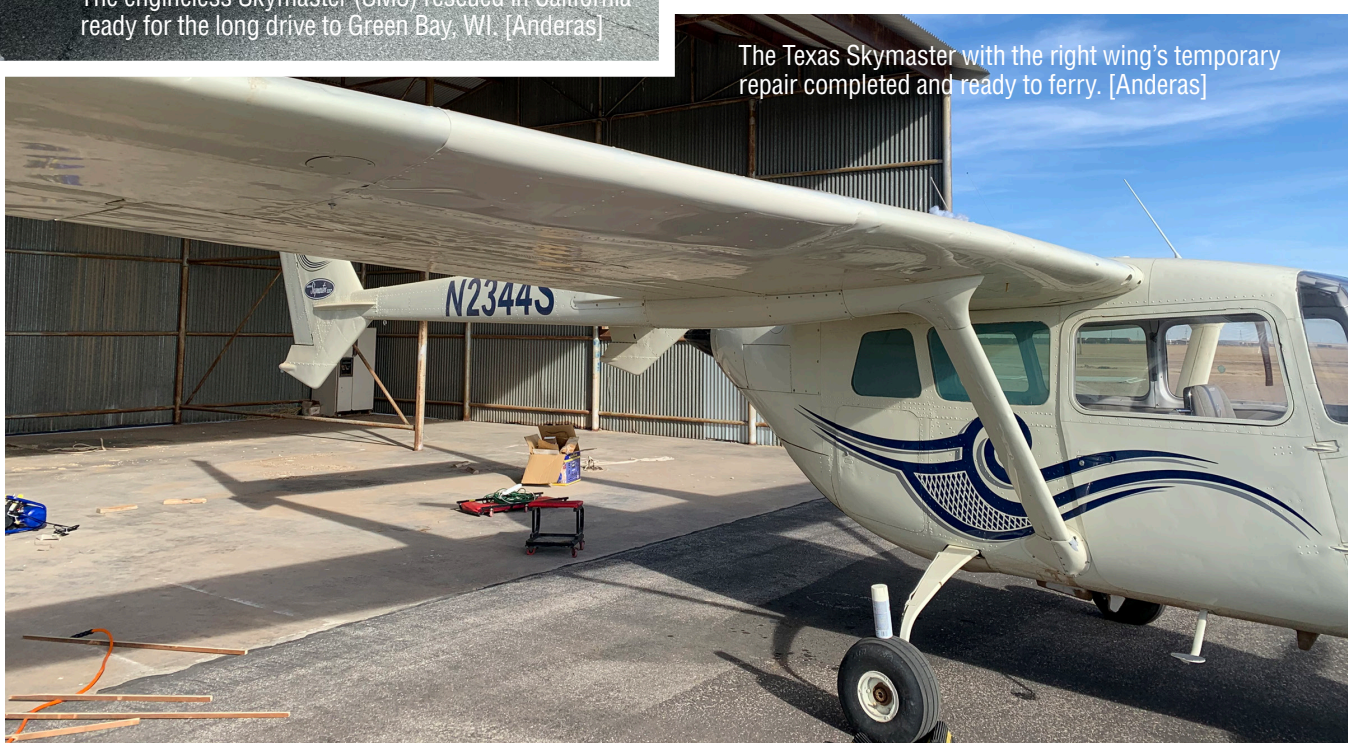
The damaged right wing of the Texas Skymaster (SM2). Anderas and Keenan saw rescue potential in the aircraft that the seller did not. [Anderas]


The engineless Skymaster (SM3) rescued in California ready for the long drive to Green Bay, WI. [Anderas]

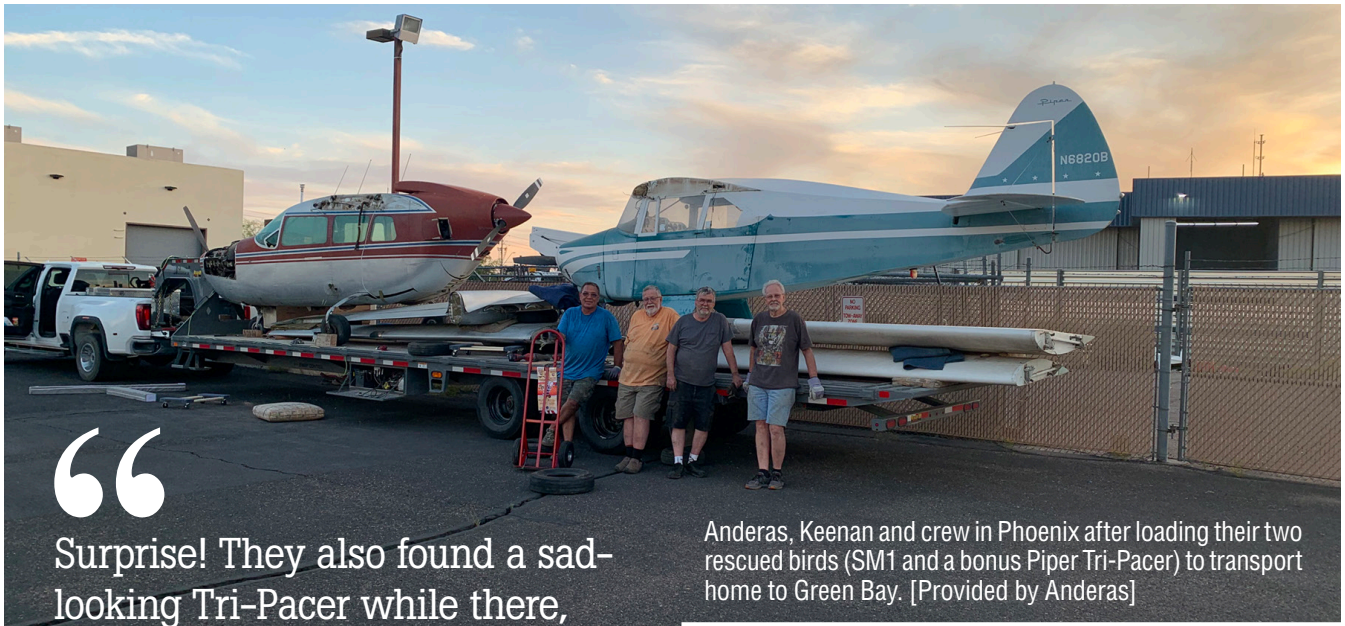
Flying on the Side

As one might imagine, a career as a surgeon can be quite time-consuming. However, it does afford the personal resources to pursue one's passions. For Pepe, that passion became aviation as soon as he could find a way to get started.

He did his initial training and first solo in a C-172 in Texas in 1972. After moving to Chicago, he completed his Private Pilot Certificate in 1975 out of Midway Airport (KMDW). Once he got settled in Green Bay, his passion began to really blossom. He added an Instrument Rating, then a Commercial Certificate with Multi-Engine and Sea-Plane Ratings. He traveled to Florida and added a DC-3 Type Rating on a whim. In February 2024, he was awarded the Wright Bros. Master Pilot Award (WBMPA) by the FAA for 50 years of flying post-solo. To date, he's logged time in 50 aircraft types. His passion became



The Texas Skymaster with the right wing's temporary repair completed and ready to ferry. [Anderas]



> “Surprise! They also found a sad-looking Tri-Pacer while there, struck a quick deal for it, and put it on the trailer with SM1.”

Anderas, Keenan and crew in Phoenix after loading their two rescued birds (SM1 and a bonus Piper Tri-Pacer) to transport home to Green Bay. [Provided by Anderas]

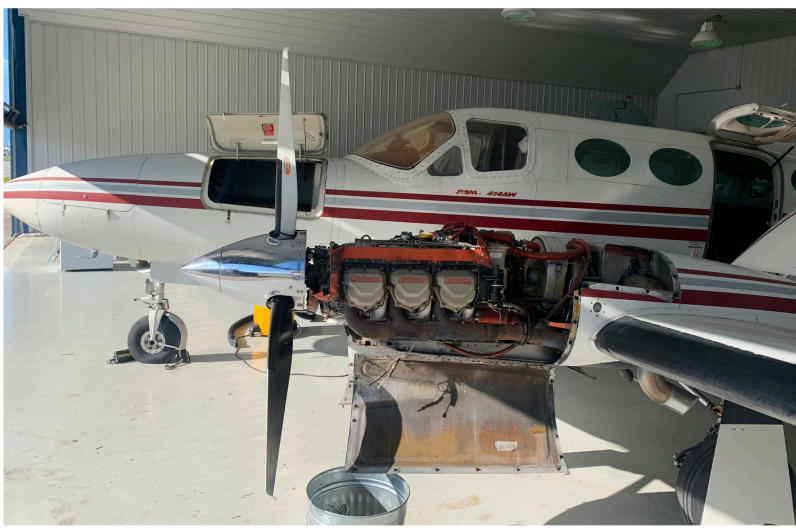
more than just flying, and seeing any type of neglected or abandoned was often more than he could bear.

Over five decades as an aviator, he’s acquired over 20 abandoned, neglected, or basket-case aircraft and returned them to airworthiness, including several twins. He does this with the capable help of his good friend, Jim Keenan, a local A&P/IA. After returning to flight status, some of the planes have been quickly passed on to new caretakers. Several are still on the flight line of Jet Air Group, the FBO and flight school he now owns at Green Bay’s Austin Straubel Int’l Airport (KGRB). Others remain in his personal collection. His favorites have been the twins, most of which he’s hung on to for long periods of time, using them for personal transport and pleasure.

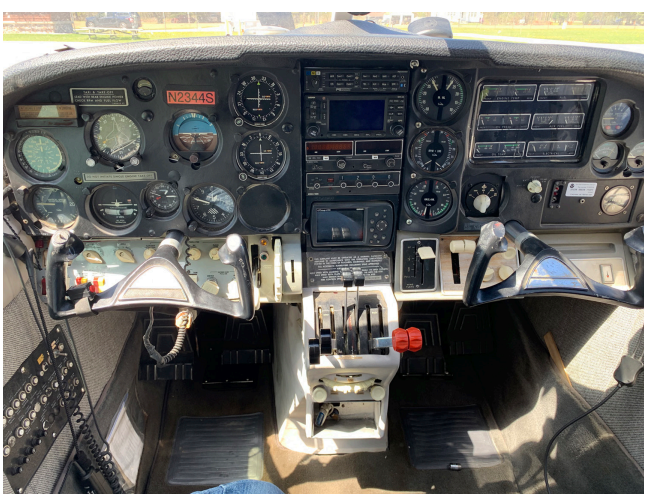
Singles Seeking Companionship

The fleet Dr. Anderas and Mr. Keenan have returned to flight is a mix of ultra-rare types, common trainers, antiques, classics, and contemporaries. It’s not the rarity of a type that attracts Pep. It’s usually just that the aircraft is forlorn and awaiting rescue. He says that many find him rather than vice versa. Pep’s goal is not award-winning restorations (though that has happened along the way). His goal is simply to save a plane from near-certain death and return it to flight.

It all started when two pre-WWII Aeronca Chiefs (abandoned for 40 years each) were returned to flight. He flew each briefly before selling them to new caretakers. For common types, there have been multiple Cessna 172s of various vintage and sub-models and a couple of C-182s as well. All purchased non-airworthy and returned to flight. There were no less than four Stinson 108 models, the first of which became an Oshkosh award winner. The last was trucked home from Colorado and is currently an ongoing project. There have been two Citabrias. Pep still owns and flies the ‘76 model



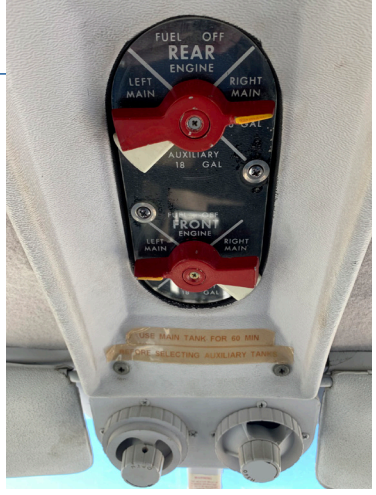
Anderas’ recently rescued Cessna RAM 414 is a near-future project he hopes to get airworthy by next year, barring any major surprises in its condition. [Anderas]

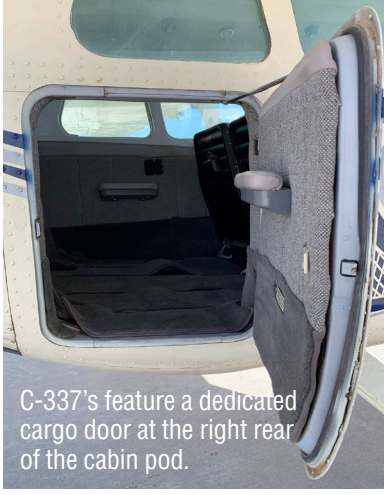


The panel of Anderas’ 1965 Skymaster has only been updated in its radio stack (partially) since rescue. The empty slot at the bottom of the power quadrant is where the inoperative autopilot was removed. [Matthew McDaniel]

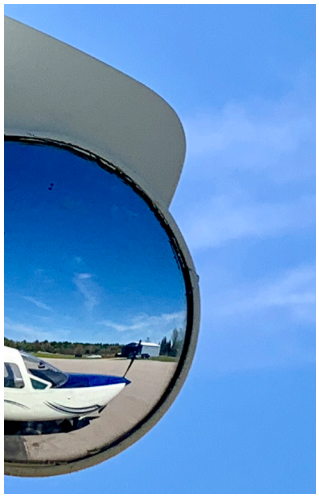
regularly. He bought a crashed '73 model in Phoenix and trucked it home, where the airframe is currently being restored while the engine is out for overhaul. A Cherokee 180, abandoned for 20 years, is also an ongoing project.

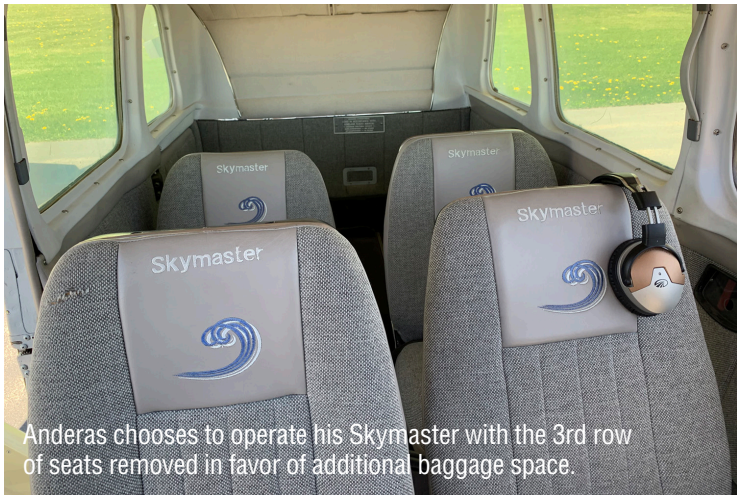
Less common types include a Cessna 175, which was abandoned for 30 years. Its unusual geared engine started right up on the decades-old avgas still in the tanks! It was eventually ferried to Wisconsin and is a work in progress today. The 1940 Porterfield was purchased as a disassembled basketcase with many missing parts. Today, it's a flying beauty queen that recently went to a new caretaker. A 1946 Ercoupe has recently been completed and awaits only paperwork to return to flight.




C-337's feature a dedicated cargo door at the right rear of the cabin pod.

Then there are the truly rare types. A 1945 CallAir that returned to flight after a decade of abandonment and has since been sold. A Scheibe SF25B motor-glider was shipped to Pep in a container from Sweden. Today, it is restored and flies in the summers from Nicolet Airport (88WI), the private grass strip Anderas and several friends own on the outskirts of Green Bay.





Anderas chooses to operate his Skymaster with the 3rd row of seats removed in favor of additional baggage space.

Twin Temptresses

One of Anderas' favorite twins was the Cessna 401 he flew for over 1,000 hours. However, the first twin Pep rescued was a 1965 Piper Aztec, which he bought in 2017 while driving down I-65 on his way to pick up a crashed Twin Beech (more on that later). The PA-23-250 sat abandoned in Pennsylvania for 5+ years. After an extensive annual, he flew it home to GRB. There, all its issues were corrected, an engine was top overhauled, and he flew it right up until selling it earlier this year.

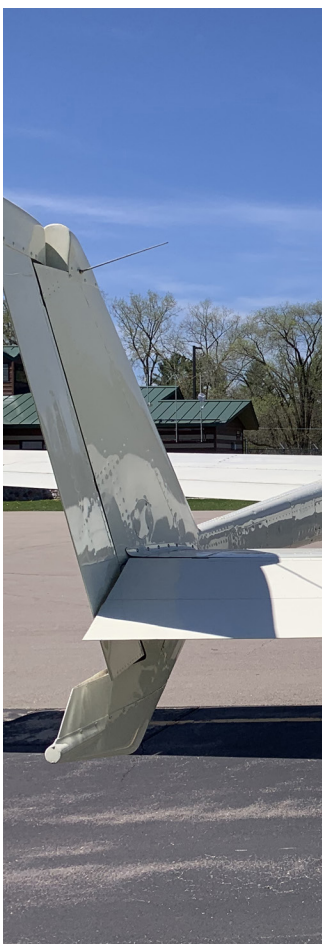
Another ultra-rare type is his 1960 Dornier Do.28A (one of only two airworthy A-models remaining in the U.S.). Twin & Turbine previously detailed these aircraft and how they were saved (see A Flight Review with History; Dornier Do.28 in the April 2023 issue).

Anderas recently bought a RAM-converted Cessna 414 for "a song." He says he and Jim will thoroughly inspect it soon to determine if it can be made airworthy before beginning to spend money on it. Unsurprisingly, he suspects it can be and that they'll work on it through the coming winter months.

The aforementioned Beechcraft Model 18 is a future project he trucked from Atlanta. It is currently on the back burner, with too many other projects consuming his time and resources. However, he hopes once those projects are done and sold, the Twin Beech can be moved to the front of the shop and completed, as it's the plane that started him into twins and the type that first kindled his passion for airplanes.

Full Circle Skymaster

Cessna Skymasters became Anderas' accidental favorite. The 10th production C-336 Skymaster had been bought and disassembled by a friend's father. Thereafter, it sat for 15 years before another friend acquired it. Then, it sat for a few more years. One day, it appeared in Pep's hangar, and his friend said simply, "It's yours now!" It was still completely disassembled and gutted. Pep looked at it day after day, dreaming, but he saw it as a project that was more than he wanted to take on. So, he offered it to the mission organization JAARS, which needed a test-bed aircraft for an experimental engine. Their very capable maintenance staff reassembled the aircraft, but their deal for the test engine fell through. So, they returned the aircraft to Pep, assembled and nearly ready to fly.



Being the original Skymaster, it was not a stellar performer. Regardless, Pep appreciated its economy and simplicity. With fixed

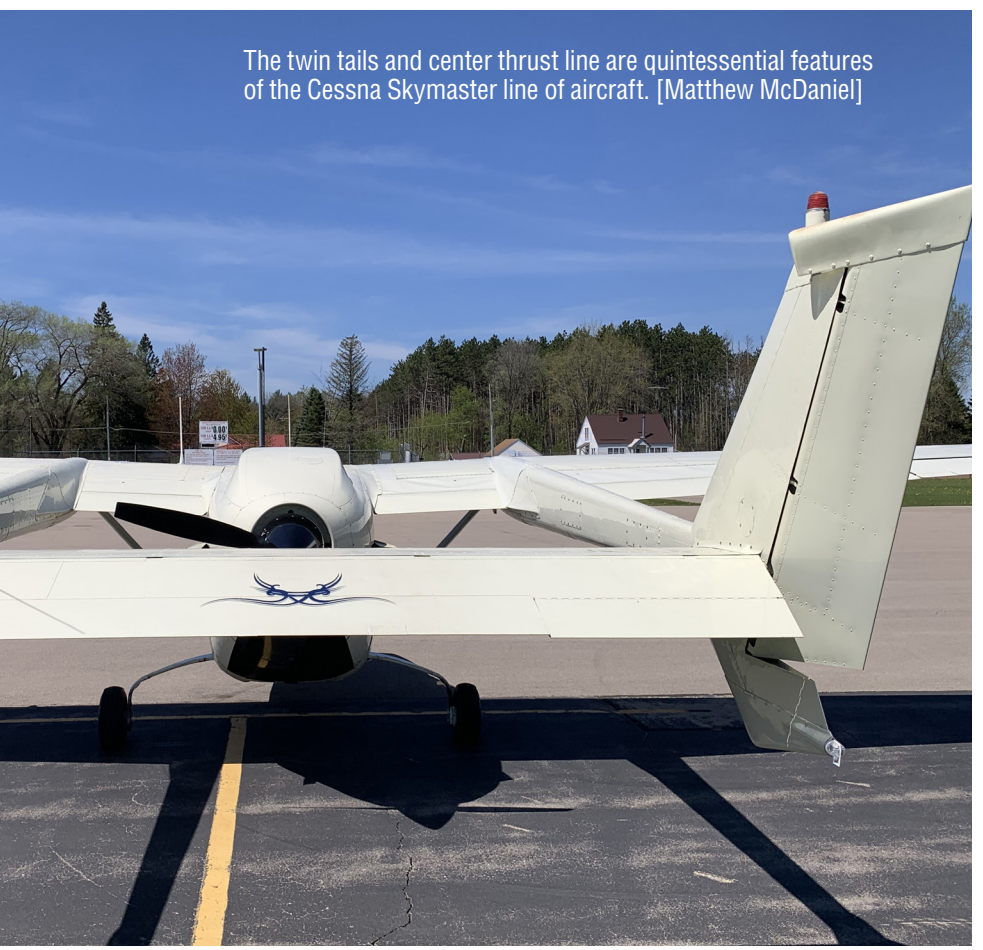
gear and normal aspiration, its systems were basic, and it was a reliable performer for him. He flew it for a year and loved it but soon moved on to other things. In retrospect, it remains the twin he looks back on with the most fondness (for having owned and flown) and regret (for having sold). Fast forward to the past few years…

Knowing Pep's interest in abandoned aircraft, a friend sent him a lead. There was a C-182 and a C-337 abandoned in Phoenix, Arizona. Both were traced to the same owner. While Pep was not looking for any more projects at the time (much less two), a package deal for both was struck. Thus, years after selling his 336 and without any intention to do so, Pep returned to the Skymaster game.

It Takes Three to Make Two

The Phoenix 337 was rough and had been sitting idle for 15 years. Soon, Pep and Jim were readying both the Skylane and Skymaster to be ferried across the Rockies. However, the Skymaster's front engine was badly corroded, and a decision was made to truck the plane to GRB instead. Jim then found a different 337 in Texas (we'll call it SM2). That one had suffered wing damage in a partial hangar collapse. Otherwise, it was in relatively good shape. Initially, they thought they would remove the wing from SM1 (in AZ), and take it to Texas to install on SM2. As fate would have it, while towing an empty trailer to Phoenix to remove the wing from SM1, they learned of yet another Skymaster (SM3) languishing in California without engines. So, they bypassed SM1, driving on to CA to retrieve SM3. Changing their minds yet again, they trucked SM3 home and decided they'd repair the wing of SM2 on-site in Texas instead. A month later, they finally got to Phoenix to load up SM1 for its drive to GRB. Surprise! They also found a sad-looking Tri-Pacer while there, struck a quick deal for it, and put it on the trailer with SM1. The little Piper "milk stool" is also in GRB, awaiting the replacement of its 1960s linen fabric.

With SM1 (from AZ) and SM3 (from CA) safely in GRB, they returned to Texas to repair the wing of SM2. The intent was to make it ferryable, not to do a permanent repair. That would allow the big job of changing the wing to be done at GRB (the twin boom configuration of a 336/337 makes swapping a wing a significant undertaking). In Texas, the right wing of SM2 was partially re-skinned forward of the spar, and several rib repairs were made. A paint touch-up was applied with rattle cans before it headed north. Over the course of that winter, the right wing of SM3 (CA bird) was pulled and then installed onto SM2 (TX bird). Pep and Jim worked through its squawk list, giving it a fresh annual and some rudimentary paint improvements. Pepe has been enjoying it throughout 2024. SM2 (TX bird) is the Skymaster you see pictured here and will likely be the preferred cross-country machine for Pep and his wife for the foreseeable future. Pep reports that they both love the Skymaster not just for its flying qualities but for its ease of entry/exit, as well. Something to consider as aging begins to play a bigger role in what planes you choose to fly.



The twin tails and center thrust line are quintessential features of the Cessna Skymaster line of aircraft. [Matthew McDaniel]

Cessna's Push-Pull Twin

Many centerline-thrust twins were designed and built before Cessna first flew its Model 336 in 1961. So, when Skymaster production began in 1963, it was not a revolutionary concept. It was hoped the configuration might reduce loss of control accidents due to mishandling of asymmetrical thrust. That would be game-changing within the light twin market that existed then.

The 336 wasn't a big success out of the gate, and only 195 were built. For the 1965 model year, the 337 "Super Skymaster" was introduced, sporting retractable gear, a rear-engine air scoop, a horsepower boost from 195 to 210 per engine, and other refinements. The 337 model line took off. Turbocharging was introduced in 1967 (T337), and pressurization in 1973 (P337). The military operated over 500 O-2 Skymasters throughout the Vietnam era and into the late 1980s. By the time Cessna ended production in 1982, almost 3,000 had been built. In time, the simplified "Skymaster" name became a synonym for all 336 & 337 variants.

Initially, the cabin had a 6-seat configuration in 3 forward-facing rows. However, this configuration left only a tiny aft baggage space. Realistically, the more popular configuration was 2 rows of 2 seats with the aft row removed. That left a huge internal cargo area and an external right-side baggage door for direct access to it. However, for those unwilling to ditch two seats, Cessna provided a solution in the form of a belly cargo pod. That allowed 6 people in the cabin and ample baggage space below, but it did come with weight and performance penalties. Some would say it also came with an aesthetic penalty!

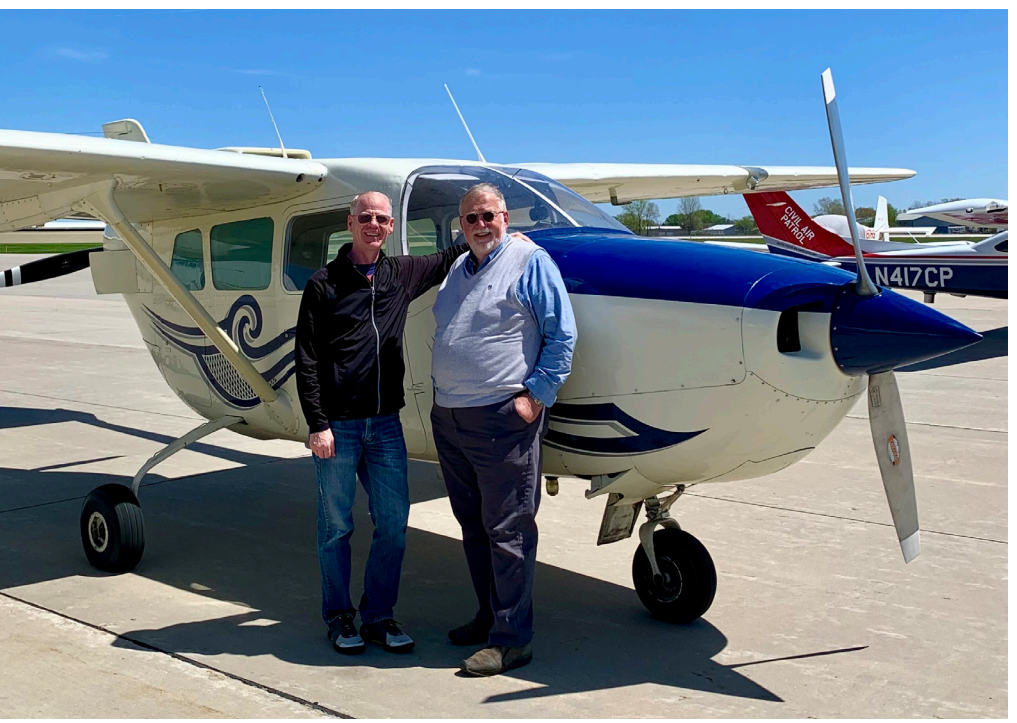
Flying Centerline Thrust

I had flown a number of pusher-powered singles in the past but had never had the opportunity to fly an inline twin. Pep graciously offered me the left seat. SM2 is an older 337, and its panel layout reflects that. The primary six instruments are directly in front of the pilot, but their arrangement hadn't yet settled into the now-standard 6-pack. Yet, it is still relatively organized, with a center stack of radios and engine gauges clustered to the right. Another hint to its age is the single green gear-down light versus 3 individual lights. However, the mains can be seen from within the cockpit, and there is a mirror to see the nose gear. The whole thing feels vintage Cessna 210-like until reaching the centralized power quadrant and finding two of everything.

The rear engine is considered to be #2 in a push-pull twin. Since that engine cannot be seen from the cockpit (except through a tiny convex mirror), it is started first so it can be heard. After starting, verify a stable engine via the instruments, then start #1. The engines on Anderas' 1965 model are fuel-injected, 210 horsepower Continental IO-360s. Since the rear engine doesn't benefit from as much prop-blasted ram air across its cylinders, it heats up fastest and should be watched closely during extended ground operations. However, in every other way, the run-up is standard, and taxiing is even easier than a single, as the engines counteract each other's turning tendencies.

The initial takeoff in a Skymaster is where things are weird for a few seconds. The #2 (rear) engine's throttle is advanced first to ensure power is rising normally. This can be done on the roll or with the brakes held. If done on the roll, be prepared to apply the left (not right) rudder to counteract the engine torque of the backward-facing engine. Only then should the #1 throttle be advanced to match the #2, at which point they can both be pushed to full power together. Once they are matched, the Skymaster is a counter-rotating twin that effortlessly tracks the centerline. Rotation and initial climb are pure piston Cessna in both sight picture and control feel.

The Skymaster got some pilots into trouble in that initial phase of flight, with a loss of engine power. Of course, that's exactly what the centerline configuration was meant to prevent. Ironically, the 336 had fewer issues, even though its operating engine had less power to climb with. Because the 336 is fixed-geared, pilots could focus attention on maintaining Vyse (blue line) and keeping the airplane climbing. It's the same situation in a 337; a pilot's gut instinct is to retract the gear to reduce drag. The problem is, when the gear is down on a Skymaster, all of its many gear doors are closed, and the wheel wells are covered. When the gear is selected UP, those big doors open into the slipstream. The result is a performance loss equivalent to at least -240 FPM during the gear cycling process. That momentary performance loss was enough to kill off any climb and sometimes even induce a descent. It's not a good situation during a low-altitude engine failure. However, the solution is simpler than the problem; the gear should remain down/locked until sufficient altitude has been gained, allowing it to be safely cycled UP without risk of dangerous altitude loss.



Author Matthew McDaniel (left) and Skymaster owner/rescuer Per Anderas (right) pose with N2344S at its new home base of Green Bay Austin Straubel Int'l Airport (KGRB), WI. [Jet Air Group]

For the same reason, when landing single-engine, the gear should be extended well before flying an approach or a traffic pattern to allow it to cycle to full DOWN and the doors to re-close. This puts the aircraft into known drag settings that can be managed appropriately throughout an approach and landing. The gear-down performance penalty is only -100 FPM versus the gear fully retracted.

Engine failures at altitude (when the gear is up) are genuinely benign. Identify and verify the failed engine and feather its prop. Applying additional power to the operating engine will induce no more turning tendencies than in a single-engine aircraft. Rudder is applied to counteract the

powered prop only, rather than any asymmetrical thrust (right if only the front engine is operating, left if the rear). There is one interesting caveat, though. The aircraft climbs slightly better on the rear engine than the front alone. About 50 FPM better according to the POH. However, starting with 1973 models (turbocharged and/or pressurized), those notations are removed from the POH, and single-engine performance charts don't specify which engine is operating.

In normal operations, typical climbs are in the 1,000 FPM range. Pep has seen cruise speeds in the 160 MPH range, burning 25-30 GPH. Economy settings can easily get the fuel flows below 20 GPH total if the pilot is content to cruise a bit slower. Single-engine, the normally-aspirated 337 can generally manage 200-300 FPM climbs at Vyse. Single-engine service ceilings are generally higher in similarly powered/sized centerline thrust versus conventional twins, as far less aerodynamic drag is introduced to content with asymmetric thrust.

Maneuvers look and feel like a C-210 or C-206, or even a heavily loaded C-182. This includes pattern work and landings. The only exception I noted was the 337 is a bit lacking in elevator trim. There is a feature that locks out additional up trim when the flaps are selected beyond 15 degrees. This leaves the pilot holding a fair bit of back pressure as final approach speed is established. Yet, it's not more than can be overcome manually (including the necessity to flare and hold the nose wheel off after touchdown).

Like any complex, multi-engine aircraft, the Skymaster line has its share of system quirks specific to the sub-model and production year. None are any more difficult to manage than with more traditional twins. As with any aircraft type, it's a matter of type-specific training, good systems knowledge, and adherence to checklists, POH, and established procedures.

The Triple Double

Meanwhile, back in Green Bay, the first 337 Pep located in Phoenix (SM1) is next on his project list. Right after the annual inspection on his Dornier Do.28 is completed, anyway. When SM1 does fly again, Pep will likely fly it enough to call his "rescue" accomplished before selling it. Having successfully salvaged three Skymasters that were all just as likely to see a scrap yard as they were to fly again, Pep and Jim are making two flyable 337s from them. It may be impossible to save them all, but 2 out of 3 isn't bad! T&T

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