EAA CHAPTER 983

RIVETING NEWS-SEPT/OCT 2026

Safety Minute

New Unicom for 0TX1 and 66TE!

Tell All Your Friends! Unicom Frequency will be 123.075

Inside this Issue

Riveting News Editors
Erin Hollis
Tom Woodward

BRAZOS VALLEY BUNCH EAA 983 GRANBURY, TX

WWW.EAA983.ORG

Fly-In & Car Show

Experimental Aircraft Association, Chapter 983

September 26, 2026 9 am to 3 pm

Pecan Plantation Airpark, TX

- **Young Eagle Flights**
- **Aircraft Simulator**
- **Radio Control Display**
- **Gyrocopters**
- **Gliders**
- **Food Available**
- **Silent Auction**
- **Fire Trucks**
- **Helicopters**
- **Fun for all ages!**
- **Airport ID is ØTX1**
- **New CTAF 123.075**
- **Pattern on West side**
- **EAA983.org for info**

TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK

Dennis and Stephanie Smith: Building Airplanes Together

By Thomas Woodward

Dennis and Stephanie Smith have built, owned, and flown a variety of aircraft over the years, but their latest projects—a pair of aircraft being built at the same time, a Van's RV-12 and a Rans S-21 powered by a Viking Honda conversion—are among their most ambitious. During a recent visit to their hangar, they shared how aviation became part of their lives, why they enjoy building airplanes together, and what keeps them excited about Experimental aviation.

Hangar Talk- Dennis and Stephanie Smith

Q: Let's start at the beginning. How did each of you two get interested in aviation?

Dennis: My dad was a pilot and an engineer for Lockheed and Boeing, so I grew up around airplanes. We always had airplanes around when I was growing up, and flying just seemed like a natural thing to do. I never became an engineer like my dad—I wasn't quite as good at math—but I earned my private pilot certificate and have enjoyed flying ever since.

Stephanie: My dad spent his career in the Air Force Reserve, so I grew up around military airplanes. Whenever I'd visit him on base, we'd be right on the flight line. I loved watching the airplanes. Later, when I was in high school, I had the opportunity to take a private pilot ground school class, and that's when I really discovered general aviation.

Q: How did the two of you meet?

Dennis: Believe it or not, because of an airplane. I was building an Avid Flyer in the front room of my house in Olympia, WA. I'd leave the garage door open while I worked.

Stephanie: I'd walk by, see the airplane project, and stop to talk.

Dennis: Those conversations eventually turned into dating, and here we are.

Q: So aviation has always been part of your relationship?

Stephanie: Absolutely. It's something we've always enjoyed together.

Q: You've built quite a few airplanes over the years.

Dennis: We've owned or built an Avid Flyer, a Glasair, a Team Air-Bike, worked on a three-quarter-scale Cub, owned certified airplanes, and now we're each building a Van's and Ran's airplanes. Every project teaches you something new. Sometimes we've finished them, sometimes we've sold them before they were complete, but we've learned something from every single one.

Q: What do each of you do professionally?

Dennis: I spent most of my career as an operating room nurse. I also served as a Flight Nurse in the Air Force Reserve, transporting patients on C-141 aircraft around the world.

Stephanie: I'm an engineering manager for Moog, working in aircraft certification. Our group helps integrate avionics into airplanes, develops the engineering documentation, and works with the FAA to certify those installations.

Q: Does your professional background help when you're building airplanes?

Dennis: Nursing teaches attention to detail and following procedures. Those skills definitely carry over into building an airplane.

Stephanie: Engineering certainly helps. You learn to think through problems methodically.

Hangar Talk- Dennis and Stephanie Smith

Q: Why did you choose the S-21?

Dennis: We had been flying a four-place Cherokee, but we realized that 90 percent of our flying was just the two of us. We wanted something economical, fun to fly, and simple to maintain. The S-21 checked all those boxes. We also liked the tricycle landing gear and the ability to operate comfortably from grass strips.

Q: One thing everyone notices is your engine. Why did you go with a Viking instead of a Rotax?

Dennis: It's a turbocharged Honda Accord engine converted by Viking Aircraft. It produces about 195 horsepower, burns auto fuel, and was available much sooner than a Rotax. It's also considerably less expensive. Some people are surprised by the choice, but there are already quite a few Viking-powered experimental airplanes flying successfully.

Q: Are you planning to do your own maintenance?
Dennis: Yes. Since the RV-12 will be certificated as an Experimental Light Sport Aircraft, we both took the Light Sport Repairman Inspection course so we can perform our own annual condition inspections. That's one of the big advantages of owning an Experimental airplane.

Q: Stephanie, I understand one of these airplanes has a special purpose.

Stephanie: (Laughing.) I'd like to fly it to work. I work in Mineral Wells, and living on an airport makes that possible. Instead of sitting in traffic, I'd much rather spend twenty minutes flying.

Q: When do you expect both airplanes to be finished?
Dennis: The S-21 is very close. The other project is coming along nicely, too. Like every builder, we're waiting on parts now and then, but we're making steady progress.

Q: What's your favorite part of building?
Stephanie: Solving problems together.

Dennis: And seeing the airplane slowly become something you can actually fly.

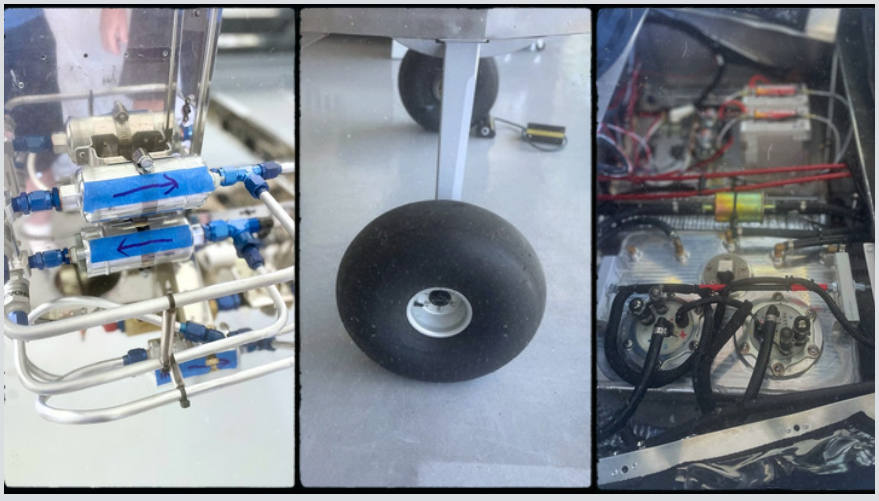
Q: Any advice for someone thinking about building their first airplane?

Dennis: Don't be intimidated. Ask questions. Use the EAA Technical Counselors and Flight Advisors. There are plenty of people willing to help, and you'll learn something every day.

Hangar Talk- Dennis and Stephanie Smith

Closing

Walking through Dennis and Stephanie Smith's hangar, it's obvious that these airplanes are about much more than rivets, engines, and avionics. They're the result of years of shared experiences, countless evenings in the workshop, and a love of aviation that continues to grow with every project. When these airplanes make their first flights, they'll represent not only successful builds, but also the teamwork and friendships that define the Experimental Aircraft Association.



EAA Chapter 983 Oshkosh Brats And Bevs

After a long, sweaty day of exploring all that EAA Airventure has to offer, it's nice to reconvene with old and new friends for a delicious dinner.

Doug and Sheryl Crumrine organized a fabulous dinner, along with help from many of our chapter members to refresh us all before the amazing Night Air Show. A special thank you to all who contributed, we can't wait for next year!

Osh Kosh Photo Dump- So Much to See, A Week Is Not Enough!

Cool off under the trees at the Seaplane Base.

Warbirds, Experimental, Vintage, Award Winners, STOL, Ultralights galore!

EAA 983 has made it on the map...At Oshkosh Airventure Museum!

Class III Single Engine (231+ hp)
Keith Steiner
Granbury, Texas
Piper PA-24 Comanche, N9321P

Pecan Neighbor Wins Award at Oskkosh 2026

from www.EAA.org/Airventure

Named for aviation pioneer Charles Lindbergh, the Lindy Awards honor the dedication and skill it takes to build an aircraft that stands out as the "best of the best." Around the world, the Lindy is considered the highest honor in aircraft craftsmanship.

Every year, hundreds of stunning aircraft descend on EAA AirVenture Oshkosh, each hoping to take home a Lindy. Only a small fraction earn any award at all — and an even smaller number claim a Lindy.

Awards are presented across six categories: Homebuilts, Warbirds, Vintage, Rotorcraft, Seaplanes, Ultralights and Lightplanes

While visual appeal plays a role in judging, it's the craftsmanship behind the aircraft that truly matters. Meticulous construction, careful restoration, and diligent upkeep are what it takes to earn a Lindy.

Congratulations to our new neighbor, Keith Steiner, one of this year's Lindy Award winners!

EAA Tool Crib

Are you working on a project and realize your deburring tool just won't deburr anymore? Or that you don't have what you need to finish the job?

Check with Charlie "The Tool Guy" Adams. He's in charge of our EAA Tool Crib.

You can contact him directly at 817-219-0162 to reserve your torque wrench, aircraft scales, or even a prop balancer.

There is a list of items on our website to see what we have in 'da crib. www.eaa983.org

Whether you like it or not, they are coming!

by Thomas Woodward

As old-timers who started flying somewhere between the Wright Brothers and today, we don't think it will happen; we don't want it to happen; but it's coming at us fast and furious whether we like it or not. Totality may not arrive before we depart this planet, but we will see the beginning of the era. What I'm referring to are electrically powered, personal aircraft, capable of lifting a person or two on just the juice from your electrical grid.

Each year for the last three or four Airventures, I have seen more and more startups offering electric-powered airplanes, though calling them airplanes is stretching it a bit since they are not like the two-winged aircraft we currently know.

Most companies are initially aiming for the military or commercial market and already have vehicles that serve at least the military sector. But now a few are aiming at the personal, rich-man, pleasure market.

One company, Velo-X, has introduced a one-person unit called the Velocitor X-1. As they say in their brochure, ***"Lift off vertically from your driveway or small open area. Climb effortlessly. Level out into a smooth, quiet cruise at 70 mph. Take in views you've never seen before. Land wherever your day takes you. If you can handle a side-by-side, a snowmobile, or a motorcycle, you can fly this aircraft."***

The Velo-X has eight independent motors. If one has an issue, the others keep you flying. It has a ballistic parachute as a last line of defense and utilizes an automatic stability system, onboard sensors, and LIDAR obstacle awareness to keep you flying smoothly and safely. Simply release the controls and it will maintain a hover in the current position. It has a 45 minute flight time with reserves and can travel at 70 mph. Useful load is 260 lbs. You can recharge to 80% in one hour, so clearly this is not a machine to travel long distances, but rather for purely recreational flying or to commute above traffic to work.

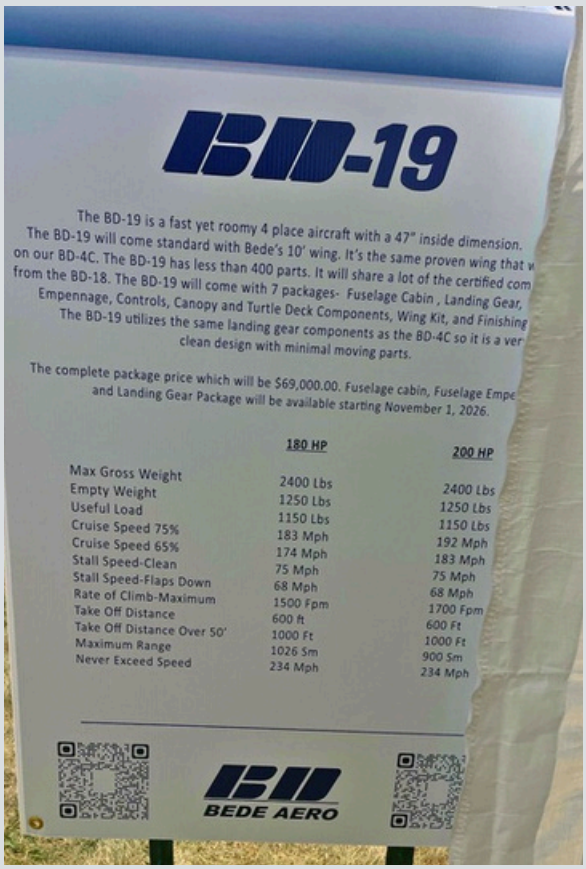
Velo-X is expecting to deliver their first unit in the first quarter of 2027, When I asked if the deposit was kept in escrow, I was told it's non-refundable. I asked if they lived through the Jim Bede era and told them that might be a deal-killer to many.

The first 100 units will go for $156,000.

www.veloxaerospace.com

Bede-19...To be, or not to be...

by Thomas Woodward



Walking among the usual suspects of kit airplanes like the oft-seen RV, Kit Fox, Rans, Sonex, and others, I notice something a little different. A kit airplane company that's been around longer than most, yet with something both old and new.

Bede Aviation has been selling kits for decades, and is now offering factory-built aircraft as well. Many remember the shenanigans Jim Bede played when he took deposits for the Bede 5, was unable to deliver a viable engine, and ultimately went bankrupt, never returning the money to a very angry customer base.

Jim has long passed, but the business has been taken over by his son Jim, who is still offering the BD-4 and BD-5 in a revised kit as well as new models like the single seat BD-6 and BD-17 and now the BD-17 and BD-19. The latter of which caught my attention as I was exploring AirVenture.

The BD-19 is in the pre-production design phase with few specs, or composite drawings. But they did bring a partially built model to the expo. What interested me is the BD-19 will be a four place airplane, similar in size and shape to the original Grumman Tiger, which Bede also designed. Entry into the cabin will be via a sliding canopy, ala the Tiger, but the proposed specs has it cruising at about 160 knots using a 185-195 HP Continental piston engine. That's 25 knots faster than the Tiger if you haven't noticed! If that's to be believed, this will be an incredible increase. The shoulder width will be more expansive than a Bonanza, while the airframe will be a honeycomb composite and will roll on conventional gear with a swiveling nose wheel.

Don't bother going to the web site at www.jimbede.com to find out about the airplane, as there is no information about it other than the model number. The kit is projected to cost $69,000 if you add the engine, interior and avionics. Or you have the option to buy a factory-built BD-19 for $169,000.

Let's hope that Jim Jr. is better at delivering a product than his father was.

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