



Arty Trost

I'm sure that Arty Trost is, in a lot of ways, what we male pilots call "a typical woman." But I can't think of any of those ways at the moment, after spending some time in getting to know her. *Remarkable*, yes; *typical*, no.

Arty was camped next to her 1984 Maxair Drifter, all the way down near the GEICO building, along the Paradise City runway at Sun 'n Fun. She had flown that Rotax 503-powered machine from Sandy, Oregon, starting on March 26. Sixty flight hours, 47 stops, 241 gallons of pre-mix, and 3611 open-cockpit miles later, Arty was still fresh about flying.

At 4'11", Arty looks some 20 years younger than she says she is (65), probably because she's always smiling, thinking, talking, or helping some young aspiring pilot (particularly young girls) with their enthusiasm. She's championing the Penelope Pilot Project [www.penelopepilotproject.org] and writing her blog, www.LessonsFromTheEdge.com/uladventure2009.htm.

Arty flies her Drifter (now weighing 320 pounds and registered as an E-LSA) on at least one multi-week trip a year, though this year's trip to Lakeland was by far her longest. She

just loves flying, and flying that "irrigation pipe with wings," as she calls it.

The machine isn't entirely stock. Arty's added a battery and a few amenities, like two giant plastic utility boxes that hold everything she needs for weeks of camping. There are a pair of 8-gallon tanks from a SkyRanger and an empty 5-gallon gas can (for mixing and toting gas to the plane). On the panel, there's airspeed and altitude, a clock, CHT, dual EGT, digital tach and hours; and an MGL fuel-flow meter. Arty uses rubber bands to affix charts to her right leg and her Icom A-4 and an old hiker's GPS to her left. (At the show, client Control Vision fixed her up with their competent Anywhere Travel Companion – ATC — for the trip home.) The tailwheel is a strong-looking item from Lockwood Aviation. Arty necessarily lands in some fairly rough stuff. "I've had this tailwheel for a little over a year," she said, "and it's just wonderful. Not a speck of trouble." Some of the repairs to the rear of the main "irrigation pipe" hint at some inferior earlier equipment.

The wings have zippers on their bottoms, so Arty can store

her sleeping bag and clothes "in the overhead compartments." Also obvious is a BRS system, which is maintained to the letter.

Navigation is rudimentary, but fairly easy. "I took I-5 to Modesto, then 99 to Bakersfield... I follow roads, but the road I follow may be quite a way from the highway," Arty began, explaining that her route was tracked by SPOT, on www.LessonFromTheEdge.com/uladventure2009.htm. "A number of times, people would say, 'We saw on the website that you landed here, and so we came out to meet you.'"

Still, it's lonely up there. Arty is traveling with Randy Simpson in his Carrera, but they don't see each other in flight. "On this whole flight, I don't think I've seen another aircraft, except at airports." Arty's fuselage creates an enormous ground plane, and lets her hard-wired handheld radio reach "about 200 miles, at 2500 feet AGL."

Arty is very careful with her powerplant, and it rewards her with reliable flying time beyond anything Rotax recommends. Her pre-mix ("Years ago, when I got rid of the first engine, the



Dressed for flying in higher altitudes.



Navigation a necessity on cross-country flights.

Arty Trost:



Wing's can make good storage areas.



The Drifter's instrument panel.



Arty kneeling beside her Drifter.

guy who sold me the second one hated oil injection") uses straight unleaded, no-ethanol mogas and 50:1 Pennzoil Aircooled "when I can get it." She 's going to use oil injection when she replaces this engine, though; Arty thinks the technology's trustworthy. Another safety measure is a tiny Facet solid state automotive fuel pump. "If you fly too long at too high an altitude," Arty explained, "the diaphragm [in the Mikuni fuel pump] gives out due to its mounting configuration..." The Facet is routinely used as a primer and in climb. In cruise, it is switched off manually – but a fuel pressure sensor and switch (housed in the aspirin bottle just in front of the engine) will turn it on automatically, if needed.

That Rotax 503 has gone 650 hours between majors, and it always looks clean at minor-work time, as well. Arty feeds it that 50:1 mix, but she doesn't like the trend to ethanol in pump gas. She's a member of the e0pc.com (ethanol-free pump gas coalition), and is adamant that the problem is bigger than our general community may understand. "I have several friends with mogas STCs," she says, "who literally are grounded because they can't get a waiver for their airplanes to use any ethanol."

The 60" UltraProp isn't the best in climb or in cruise, Arty

says, but it gives the mix she needs, plus, "It's indestructible, and the cracks don't spread."

Arty became the third owner of the Drifter in 1991, after she had flown her Sunburst for a couple years. The Sunburst cruised at 32 mph and topped out at 39. Arty had some bad experiences, once running out of gas while trying to keep up with other ultralights. Someone heard her "I'm going down" call on the radio and – without knowing the ultimate result (a simple dead stick landing and a friend providing more gas,) called Arty's husband and informing him that "Arty just went down." As we sat at the Sun 'n Fun grounds, Arty looked skyward and muttered something about "'helpful' people like that..." Then she said, "So my husband said that night, 'You have two options: either don't fly with anyone faster than you, or get a faster ultralight.' [big smile] So I got this." She has over 2800 hours on it.



Arty & Bill Fortney at Sun 'n Fun 2009.