

Mary Jones

## Deadlines, Safety, Advocacy, and EAA AirVenture Oshkosh!

### But first . . . c'mon spring!

It's the first week of March as I'm writing this column. Birds were chirping this morning as I shoveled the 2 inches of snow (forecasted as "partly cloudy") from my driveway. Lately, the meteorologists have had a pretty dismal record of hitting the forecast correctly, which baffles me a bit considering all the technology they have available. Whatever, though, spring is in the air, and it can't come soon enough!

One "forecast" that is correct is that January 31, 2008, is the last day for "fat" and two-place ultralight-type machines to convert to experimental light-sport aircraft (E-LSA) status or become "lawn ornaments," as Mike Huffman writes in "Prepare for E-LSA Certification" on pages 52 through 56. This is a serious deadline; miss it, and you'll suffer financially because you'll have a machine of no value.

I call this to your attention so you'll read Mike's article and get the process started. During the January EAA-FAA Aviation Summit, the FAA committed to providing the resources needed to convert whatever aircraft apply for conversion within the prescribed deadlines. It has estimated how many machines are likely to convert and based its manpower allocations on that estimate, but it will adjust manpower if a higher demand becomes apparent. Do yourself a huge favor and get the process started, even if it means you might not get to fly as much this year. You'll be aiding the whole community. You have to make

this effort only once. Get it behind you and rest easier.


With spring also comes a resumption of flying throughout the country. Northerners have been quite jealous of their friends flying in southern climates. Now, we'll get to join you in the air. But, how rusty have your flying skills become over the winter? Did you use that nonflying time to give your aircraft a good inspection? Don't allow your exuberance about getting back into the air cloud your judgment about flying conditions (including your own condition) and/or the condition of your aircraft. Some folks are still skeptical about "this sport pilot thing"; let's not give them a cause to say, "See, I told you this was a bad idea."

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But, most importantly, get out and enjoy your hobby and introduce it to your friends. General aviation (GA)

is currently facing some significant struggles, including proposed user fees and aviation fuel tax increases. One of the best things you can do to preserve your right to fly is to help others understand the impact of general aviation on the American economy...and what our economy would be like if GA went away. Sound far-fetched? Don't be naïve; user fees and aviation fuel tax increases could dramatically change the landscape of GA. Educate your friends and neighbors. (Check out EAA's special website on this issue, <http://eaa.org/govt/index.html>.) Write your congressional representatives and senators. Make your voice heard.

Lastly, by the time you read this, EAA AirVenture Oshkosh 2007 will be less than four months away. Just this week, the United States Air Force confirmed that two F-22 Raptors will make a return visit to AirVenture, arriving on Thursday and performing throughout the weekend. What an exclamation point they will add to the Air Force's 60th anniversary display, another of the main attractions for AirVenture 2007.

Military might, the newest aircraft and aviation equipment, lots of cool airplanes, and thousands of your best friends...c'mon, you've gotta be there, too. We're hoping to see you July 23-29. This year bring a new friend and introduce him or her to the wonders of aviation. There's no better place than AirVenture Oshkosh to catch aviation fever! 

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