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Pat Howe has helped restore so many airplanes during his lifetime, it's hard for him to recall all the different ones but his present Van's Aircraft RV8A will be one he can call his own. He gained many of his present day building skills working at FBO's in Mt. Pleasant and Harold Hamp's grass strip here in Michigan. He once covered a Taylorcraft in exchange for a Seabee project but then shortly sold it unassembled. Currently Pat is part of a flying club which owns a Citabria 7KCAB hangared at Barstow.

Many evenings and weekends you can find Pat busy working in his heated 42 x 42 hangar which he had built during the spring of 2005 at the Barstow Airport. His plane will be tricycle geared and have tandem seats for 2 people. In July of 2005, he started on the tail section of this kit number 2400 RV8A, then ordered the rest of the quick build kit when the tail was finished. The 190 Horsepower ECI IO360 engine was completed with Jim Dobben working side by side with him. When the plane is finished it will be 21 feet long with a wing span of 24 feet. It will gross out at 1800 pounds with a 42 gallon fuel tank and be able to climb at 2,300 fpm. It is intended to be soloed from the front seat but the rear tandem seat will also have elevator, aileron, and throttle controls; Pat expects cruise somewhere around 200 mph while consuming about 8 gallons per hour.

He hasn't purchased the propeller yet but is fairly sure that it will be a Hartzell constant speed one. When asked about the color scheme he replied that he had nothing in mind at this time and when quizzed more replied, "I will decide later and I might ask my family for some input on that." The N number will be N240PH – the 240 representing the kit number minus a 0 and you, the reader, can figure out the PH! One of the most common questions Pat is asked, 'What is a taildragger pilot doing building a kid's toy?' (as in tricycle gear). One of the answers he gives is: "Because I can and because the plane is too expensive to ground loop."

Pat earned his pilot's license in 1989 while attending Central Michigan University; Pat also holds an Instrument rating and is an Airframe and Powerplant mechanic (A&P). At age 24 when he was first married he restored an Ercoupe in his living room and flew many hours in it. "At that point I knew I had found the perfect wife (as in Jamie)!" he commented. When asked what or who inspired him to fly he said, "I have no good story about that. I just knew as a kid that I wanted to fly."

He has had no big surprises during the construction time; many times he runs ideas past Jim Powell who is working in the same hangar on his Taylorcraft. Jim Dobben has also been a valuable source of knowledge and help with this project. Pat appreciates all this expertise and advice from these two EAA members and indicated that he is under the best of 'care and critical eyes' with them as they are both judges at Oshkosh.

The hardest part of this building project so far has been trying to manage his

time around his work so that he has time to spend on the building process. Pat is President of Evergreen Physical Therapy which has 5 locations and Sport and Spine with 6 locations all of which are in the tri-cities and central Michigan areas.

The RV8A is approximately 75% finished and Pat is looking forward to planning some long trips in it and also regularly going to fly-ins; a front baggage compartment will nearly double the available baggage capacity. He expects that his daughter, Ali, age 13, will fly with him quite a bit. The cockpit will have no vacuum driven instruments and will be all glass instrumentation so he will need some transition training.

When Pat was asked if he wanted to add anything more to this article his reply was not about his plane but how he would be so willing in his role as Flight Advisor for Chapter 1093 to offer help and advice to other builders. He could advise builders on constructing a safe, airworthy aircraft for final FAA inspection; all of this is free and is an EAA member benefit that might save the builder on his insurance bill. As Flight Advisor he could help at the beginning of the project to assist in devising an organizational plan for the project then on completion help the builder in evaluating his/her flying skills. He does not give a 'yes' or 'no' but could help you develop guidelines for making your own decisions. His last word to builders in the area was "Please use me!"











