

# The Good and Bad of Sport Pilot

I am having an absolute blast and the time of my life as a 52-year-old sport pilot! I embarked on the accelerated plan as I call it, taking a week of vacation in June 2007, getting a motel room, and working with my instructor every day for a solid week in the school's J-3 Piper Cub.

I earned my tailwheel endorsement in 13 hours, soloed after 15 hours, and completed my solo cross-country flight by 20 hours. I earned my wings on November 4, 2007, with 60 hours' total time.

My wife and I purchased a 1946 Aeronca 7AC Champ in February, and I just logged my 200th hour in 13 months. I have flown 15 Young Eagles so far and look forward to many more hours in the air. I especially enjoy the young people; they are so enthusiastic!

My heartfelt thanks to EAA!

**Brad Moore**, EAA 625933  
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I suppose that I've bitten my tongue for as long as I can. I've been interested in and around general aviation for most of my life, and I'm now 65. During those many years, I've longed to be able to fly my own airplane, but somehow, it has always escaped me, owing to the money involved.

No, I'm not "poor," certainly, but I suppose that I have a different sense of values than do many younger people (and I was once one of those myself!). When I was in high school, money *was* an object, certainly, and during my college years, something else always seemed to take first place on my budget. After I graduated with a postgraduate degree, got married, and finally got a real job, I saw the opportunity to begin the trek down my long-dreamt-of path to fly. So I

went out and got my private pilot's certificate...and was I proud!

Then the first gas crunch hit (the early '70s), and the price for aircraft rental seemed to suddenly skyrocket, and I had to put things on the back burner once more. Well, it's just kind of "hovered" back there for many years, because each time I would raise the edge of the tent, and peek in, I found that prices (just like waterfront property) always seemed to be just out of my reach.

I had a reasonably successful professional career and retired a few years ago, and at that time, a peek under the tent showed that a new rule was about to come forth that would allow for a much "less expensive" form of aircraft! Hot dog! Maybe my dream isn't totally gone, even yet!

Well, that rule (sport pilot) came into being, and sure enough, the "low-priced aircraft" followed...or did they?

I don't drive a Ferrari or a Lamborghini or even a Porsche (although I did in my younger days), not because I can't afford one, but rather because I'm too practical to believe that I could truly enjoy it any more. The same would be true of a King Air. Nice plane...*if* you've got a way to justify ownership and cost. I don't, so I've never even looked at them seriously.

On the other hand, I would love to be able to puddle-jump around my home. I live in a rural area and have no desire to enter into controlled airspace or even to go cross-country for more than 100 miles, so there are lesser aircraft that would suit me fine.

I'm also enough of a creature of comfort (and maybe too old) to *not* want to hang by my hands or to have to swallow the bugs at low altitude! In brief, my dream plane would be a

high-wing, enclosed (at least optionally) cockpit, with visual flight rules equipment, capable of flying from and landing on, my property, which is sufficiently large enough for that King Air. I don't want to carry passengers, save perhaps for my wife.

All of that said, I know that there are a number of aircraft available that meet my requirements...and some of them are pretty darned sexy, too! Until, that is, we arrive at the cost! Then, I read my latest (July) issue of *Sport Pilot*, and was struck by Dan Johnson's review of the A-22 Valor. Sounds like quite a nice aircraft, and possibly something that I could put on my list until I read his comment, toward the end of the article, in which he states, "It's closer to the price people expected for LSA when the rule was announced in 2004."

Huh? You mean that all of this time, I was expecting to be able to buy a reasonable aircraft for less than \$20K, and he only knows people who "expected" to pay \$80K and up? Wow! I'm sorry, but I think he (and many others at EAA) have been living in the "forest" (where you can't see the trees) for too long!

I don't drive a \$50K SUV that sucks down \$4 gasoline, because I don't find them practical. I don't live in some enormous "McMansion" with 15 bedrooms and enclosing 20,000 square feet (for the two of us?) because it's not practical! Why, then, would I "expect" to pay a price like that for an aircraft that isn't practical...for me?

Get serious, folks! The fact that you've either found a way to strike it rich, or else you've forgone so many other comforts to buy an airplane that you can spend that kind of money. The manufacturers seem to have simply latched onto the coattails of those SUV manufacturers and the realtors who sold the public on the

idea that "more area is better," rather than attempting to actually meet the demands and needs of Joe Average.

When Cessna announced its new LSA, I could but guffaw at the very idea, but at least I partially understood. It, after all, is accustomed to selling aircraft at high prices, in anticipation of litigation costs.

I'm sorry, but the entire industry seems to have missed the mark with this new rule, or at least the mark as I, and many of my friends, seem to have understood it. I suppose that I'll just continue to read and dream.

**Jack P. Durre**, EAA 717587  
Quitman, Georgia

## The Cost of LSA

I am sure you will receive a lot of comments on this article (How Much, August 2008 *EAA Sport Pilot*). While well written and researched, this article really does nothing to convince us little guys that any of the S-LSA out there are a bargain. Nor, for that matter, that the LSA rule is working as many of us hoped it would. I believed the intent of the sport pilot ruling was to bring aviation closer to home for those of us who do not live in the upper echelons. How can I, as a working father of four, possibly justify spending as much for an aircraft as I have for our four-bedroom home on 2 acres with a 50- by 30-foot barn?

The logic just isn't there. Again, we little guys are relegated to building our own aircraft, which we cannot use to train other future aviators, or to buying a 40-year-old plane.

It is just sad to see that even in aviation, the little guy is left in the cold. *EAA*

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