

One Step Closer

Article by Larry Zimmerman

Our club has a new crop of members who are finally moving towards their dreams of getting into the air and I am one of them. My first step since joining the club in 2009 was this July when I purchased a flying gyro with a good pedigree and over 75 hours of successful airtime. Its design is very similar to the Club's Monster Gyro and while it still needs a bit of tweaking I should easily hit my spring airworthiness certificate goal without a problem. My second step was to spend a week this November with CFI and Pilot Examiner Ron Menzie (ronsgyros.com) in Searcy Arkansas to start my flight instruction.

The strongest impression of my experience from the moment I entered Ron's hanger to the moment I left was the meticulous care he takes in everything he does – from his immaculate facilities and equipment to his thorough and patient teaching method.

The first two days had bad weather and were spent studying his ground school materials and viewing instructional tapes which provided a good foundation for what was to come. Fortunately the weather finally cooperated and I was able to log fourteen hours of flight instruction that week despite the two days of very high winds and heavy rains. All but one hour of flight time was in moderate to strong winds and I had an opportunity to get comfortable with them despite the frequent turbulence since they typically blew right down the runway and made for easy final approaches and landings.

Ron's instruction is in a modified enclosed (and heated) side-by-side RAF which was perfectly suited



to the often cold and raw weather we flew in. I had been warned by other club members that the heavier RAF would be too different from my single seat gyro but I am happy to have the stick time in it since I will be using that same machine to take my check flight with Ron for my dual seat Sports Pilot – Gyroplane certificate next year.

My next steps towards my Sport Pilot – Gyroplane goal are another week with Ron this spring and then transitioning to my gyro and soloing here in Lansing. Hopefully I can get everything finished by fall 2012. Many thanks to Ron for getting me one step closer.

