Official Publication of the Cessna Owner Organization Since 1975

# CESSNA OWNER MAGAZINE

## SKYHAWK OWNERS GUIDE

EXPERT REVIEW

OWNER RESTORATION

40 OWNER TIPS

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# FROM THE CESSNA OWNER ORGANIZATION

Welcome to the *Cessna Owner* magazine Skyhawk Owner's Guide. This guide is intended to give you advice on owning a Cessna 172, whether you're researching before you buy or own one or are looking for tips.

If you're not familiar with us, *Cessna Owner* magazine is produced by the Cessna Owner Organization, a member organization with thousands of Cessna owners who collaborate to help each other safely and enjoyably fly their planes. For just $59 a year, COO members receive:

- 12 monthly magazines with articles like those in this Owner's Guide.
- A members-only forum where you can get answers and advice from people who own Skyhawks in addition to our organization's suite of experts.
- A tech line including email support.
- Articles in recent magazines have included:
  - Avionics: The Perfect Panel (3-part series).
  - Learning to Buy or Buying to Learn: Which ownership path is better?
  - Determining the right value for your aircraft.
  - How to Properly Preflight.
  - Dozens of member restorations and hundreds of member-written tips.

We hope you take the next step and sign up to join the conversation, get your most-pressing questions answered, and read the best advice articles available anywhere. See the special offer on the facing page.

Tailwinds,
The Cessna Owner Organization Staff


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Photos by Jack Fleetwood (*www.JackFleetwood.com*) of a 1956 Cessna 172 owned by Jan and Randy Feuge.

# CESSNA OWNER MAGAZINE

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# 172 Review

by Bill Cox

The step-up market has always been critically important to the major aircraft companies. There may not be much profit in building trainers, but manufacturers are well aware that pilots often tend to buy the same brand they learn in. A pilot who earns his license in a Warrior, 152, or Musketeer is liable to consider an Arrow, Skylane, or Bonanza, respectively, as his or her first step-up airplane.

It's hard to believe, but the Skyhawk has been around since 1955. After all, take away the panel, paint and interior and you might mistake a modern model for for a 1964 model if both airplanes were in bare aluminum and parked on the ramp. But while the current model's configuration is physically very similar to that of the older models, the newest 172 is a very different animal from that early version.

No, we're not planning to detail a half-century of Skyhawk changes. We're more interested in what the 172 has become than what it used to be. Before you scoff and allege that the 21st century Skyhawk represents 20th century technology in contrast to the Cirrus SR 20/22, Diamond Star and Cessna's own TTx, consider that what went before and still remains has an undeniably strong attraction for many pilots. The Skyhawk's glass is definitely more than half-full.

## Power revolution

Right up front, the 172 Skyhawk is the most successful airplane in the world, with more than 45,000 units delivered. Since the company restarted production in 1997, Cessna has sold thousands of new generation Skyhawks of all descriptions.

The newer Skyhawk S continues the tradition of the 172, and it's the final recipient of the power revolution. The original airplane was born with a 145 hp, O-300 Conti-

Photos by Jack Fleetwood (*www.JackFleetwood.com*) of a 1956 Cessna 172 owned by Jan and Randy Feuge.

# The Skyhawk

# An Enduring Legacy

## Celebrating the most successful plane in the world

nental engine. Then, Cessna transitioned to a 150 hp Lycoming O-320 powerplant. In 1977, the company pushed the O-320s power to 160 hp, and the newest generation Skyhawk has finally settled on 180 hp with an injected Lycoming IO-360. (Yes, there was a 180 hp model back in the 1980s, the Cutlass, but relatively few were built.) The former 160 hp 172R was available in 2008, but few were sold, and Cessna officially discontinued the lower-powered airplane for model year 2009.

After many years of writing about each subsequent Skyhawk, it might seem tough to find anything new to say. The truth is, however, love them or not, Cessna's durable, everyman's single is an all-around good airplane. The Skyhawk is a little like the Toyota Camry. It's always been such a good design in so many ways that even its detractors have to acknowledge its strengths.

### The premier entry-level plane

The simple fact remains that, even if an airplane isn't outstanding in any one category, there are few San Andreas-level faults in general aviation designs. The Skyhawk may not be the fastest, the quickest climber, the best load lifter or even the cheapest, but it combines enough high marks to come out near the top in any competition. (My friend, Keke Rosberg, won the 1982 Formula One auto racing championship despite having placed first only once in the series' 20 races.)

Skyhawks have long been regarded as perhaps the premier, entry-level, family airplanes – a reasonable 2+2 machine with reduced fuel and a forgiving two-seater in full fuel mode. Indeed, in addition to their use as rental leasebacks, Skyhawks remain among the most popular trainers in general aviation.

Like many of you, I've logged my share of hours in Skyhawks of various vintage, driving some across the Atlantic and pedaling others on local hops when my airplane was in the shop. I may have a slightly different perspective than some pilots, however, as I'm fortunate to fly virtually all the competition every few years. While that definitely doesn't give me a corner on ultimate truth, it does impart a certain perspective of the relative merits of a given design.

## Training on a Skyhawk

Better still, the lady in my life is a low-time private pilot who's also had a chance to compare a number of airplanes. In the short span of three years, Dr. Peggy Herrera has flown about a dozen models, from all three new Cessnas (Skyhawk S, T-Skylane and T-206), to a Piper Archer and Malibu, to a Beech F33A Bonanza, a Mooney Executive, a Marchetti SF-260, the Goodyear Blimp and probably a few others I've forgotten.

"From a student pilot's perspective," says Herrera, "the Skyhawk is an extremely simple airplane to fly in almost every respect – almost. I've been lucky to train in an air-conditioned, 2008 model with a G1000 flat panel display. The Skyhawk couldn't be more straightforward, and I can certainly understand why it's such a popular trainer. Control response is slow and gentle, the flaps are very effective and stall speed is so low that nothing happens very fast in the pattern.

"That's an important advantage for new students having trouble keeping up with the airplane, especially during landing," Herrera continues. "I'd love to have ropes on the front of the airplane like the Goodyear Blimp, so a ground crew could help me land, but short of that, the Skyhawk has to be one of the easiest machines to put back on the ground."

Herrera feels the most challenging aspect of the newer Skyhawks is the Garmin G1000 glass panel. "It's a little overwhelming until you understand the logic, but the technology is certainly impressive," says Herrera. For short people such as Herrera, the Skyhawk's tall panel presents a bit of a challenge, but at least both front seats are vertically adjustable as partial compensation.

## Taking flying to another dimension

Cessna hasn't changed the airplane's internal dimensions much over the years. It's relatively easy to climb aboard, and the AmSafe seatbelts/air bags spring from the center to attach at the doors rather than the other way around. In other words, you'd best fasten the belts before closing the doors. The cabin is 40 inches across by 48 inches high, so you're better off being tall than wide. In fairness, the door panels are recessed at the armrest to accommodate elbows. Once you're properly perched in the left seat, the view is fairly good. The Skyhawk's tricycle gear provides a fairly stable ride on the ground with little need for brakes to steer the airplane.

With 180 hp out front, the Skyhawk S boasts a reasonable 730 fpm climb at gross, so students, owners and renters alike can score reasonable climb from sea level most of the time. Similarly, the airplane is fairly adept at training from semi-high-altitude locations such as Albuquerque, Denver, Salt Lake and Reno, though not necessarily in the dog days of summer. Service ceiling is 14,000 feet. Cruise can be as tall as 10,500 without an especially labored climb.

Max cruise comes at 8,000 feet, however. The NACA 2412 airfoil is optimized more for climb than cruise, but the airplane will still generate about 120 knots if conditions are willing and you're doing everything right. Specific fuel consumption (sfc) is fairly immutable, and the Skyhawk's durable IO-360 scores about .43 lbs/hp/hr. From that, it's fairly easy to calculate fuel burn at 75% (135 hp), 65% (117 hp) and 55% power (99 hp). The pure numbers work out to 9.7 gph, 8.4 gph and 7.1 gph respectively. If that's too many numbers, just think of burn as 10, 9 and 8 gph, and you'll be on the safe side.

## Turning cheeks

Despite their high use rate, Skyhawks benefit from an excellent safety record. The airplanes gross is only 2,550 pounds and drag is sufficient to keep speed low enough so that even full control deflection shouldn't break anything. As Peggy Herrera described, students and owners love the airplane. That's partially a function of how many cheeks it can turn to the hands of time.

The first modern Skyhawk was the first three passenger Cessna with four seats installed. Today, a typically equipped airplane sports a payload of about 475 pounds, easily enough for two folks up front plus one or two munchkins in back. Full fuel is 53 gallons, so if you leave 20 gallons in the truck (with about 2.5 hours endurance plus reserve remaining), payload only increases to about 600 pounds, still not four folks' worth. The good news is that pilots are rarely tempted to fly a full seats/full tanks mission in a Skyhawk, though the glass panel and gee whiz Garmin G700 autopilot would make the trip next to automatic.

## Aging gracefully

One trick that's fun in a Skyhawk if the load isn't too heavy is a short field takeoff. The technique is simple: power to the stop against locked brakes, release the binders when the power peaks, count to five, lever in two notches of flaps and rotate at 35 knots. If you do it right, the airplane will transition to the sky in less than 800 feet.

Similarly, the 172's low stall speed allows short field landings under 500 feet if you're willing to use the bush pilot's 1.2 Vso approach speed. Approach at 57 knots rather than the recommended 65 knots, and you can ground the airplane and brake to a stop in less than 500 feet. The usual proviso applies, however. Don't try this at home unless you're very familiar with the stall characteristics and the wind is steady and woofing right down the runway.

# SPECIFICATIONS & PERFORMANCE

## 1956 Cessna 172

All specifications and performance figures are drawn from official sources, often the aircraft flight manual or the manufacturer's web site. Another reliable source of information is Jane's All-the-World's Aircraft. Specifications on older aircraft will not always agree as several sources may differ on performance. Pricing information is from Aircraft Bluebook Price Digest, Spring 2019.

## Specifications

| | |
|---|---|
| New Piece (1956): | $11,751 |
| Avg Used Price (Spring 2019) | $24,000 |
| Engine(s)- make/model: | Cont O-300A |
| Hp: | 145 |
| TBO: | 1800 |
| Fuel type: | Avgas 73 oct |
| Landing gear type: | Ti/Fixed |
| Max TO weight (lbs): | 2200 |
| Empty weight (lbs): | 1260 |
| Useful load–std (lbs): | 940 |
| Usable fuel–std (gal/lbs): | 42 |
| Payload–full std fuel (lbs): | 688 |
| Wingspan (ft/in): | 36 |
| Overall length (ft): | 25 |
| Height (ft): | 8 |
| Wing area (sq ft): | 174.6 |
| Wing loading (lbs/sq ft): | 12.6 |
| Power loading (lbs/hp): | 15.2 |
| Seating capacity: | 4 |
| Cabin doors: | 2 |
| Cabin width (in): | 40 |
| Power loading (lbs/hp): | 12.3 |
| Cabin height (in): | 38 |

## Performance

| | |
|---|---|
| Cruise speed (max kts–75%): | 108 |
| Cruise speed (econ crs – 60%): | NA |
| Cruise Fuel Burn-msx (gph/lbs): | 7.6 |
| Best rate of climb, SL (fpm): | 660 |
| Service Ceiling (ft): | 13,300 |
| Stall (Vso – kts): | 45 |

***Bill Cox*** passed away on July 4, 2025. He took his first flight in a Piper J-3 Cub in 1953 and logged some 15,000 hours in 311 different types of aircraft since. He authored more than 2,200 magazine articles and was the on-camera host of the 1980s TV series " ABC's Wide World of Flying." Bill was rated Commercial/Multi/Instrument/Seaplane/Glider/Helicopter.

# Owners' Perspective

## Jan and Randy Feuge
## 1956 Cessna 172 "Businessliner"

Cover plane owner Randy Feuge reminds us that the 172 he and wife Jan Feuge own was originally called "Businessliner" in the POH (it wasn't a 172 yet). He said it's very easy to fly and very forgiving.

"I enjoy the ease of entry and leg room of the 172," Randy said. "They are also very easy to fly, adding to the comfort of these airplanes."

**What is the biggest challenge with your plane?**

"The O-300 145 hp engine is barely adequate. But it saves on fuel, at about 8 gallons/hour."

**Advice to prospective owners**

"Do not hesitate; these are very good airplanes. I guess that's why they have been around for so long."

by Katie Holliday-Greenley

# Worth the Wait

## Jai Pena's spruced up Skyhawk

Jai Pena started flying in the late 1980s with the intention of making it into a career, but then, as it often does, life got in the way.

"I flew for fun until about … 2000," Jai said. "Once my son was old enough to go racing go-karts and formula cars … flying was put to the side because racing took the time and budget I had for flying."

Jai left the aviation world for about 15 years until 2015 when he bought N64450 from a judge in Pennsylvania.

"I looked for years for a C-172, specifically for an M model due to their demand and their toughness," Jai said. "I knew the problems with the N models with the dual magnetos and I also knew the older … models were just too old and not very powerful; the S and XP models were too expensive and heavier, so I looked very hard for years for a low-time M model that would have at least one of these characteristics: great paint and interior, modern avionics, or one with a 180-hp engine conversion."

Ultimately, Jai chose a Skyhawk with a 180-hp engine conversion from Penn Yan Aero. When he bought it, the engine had only 500 hours on it.

"Both the prop and the engine were overhauled," Jai said. "[The engine was converted] from an O-320 (150 hp) to the O-360 (180 hp) exactly at 2,000 hours."

The airframe had 2,500 hours on it and N64450 had only had two owners since it came off the assembly line in 1975, but Jai knew it was going to need some TLC.

"The airplane was in good flying condition, but very rough cosmetically and it definitely needed a paint job as it was peeling all over," Jai said. "The interior was also in rough shape as it was all original and most of the interior and exterior plastic was cracked and very brittle from age."

Jai said he had planned to fly the airplane throughout the process of restoration but soon came to realize that choosing one with an updated panel or fresh paint and a restored interior would have been the wiser choice.

"I learned during the restoration that the engine rebuild wasn't really the most expensive or difficult part; an engine swap is actually quick," he said. "It can be done in a week or two tops. The other restoration processes are more time consuming and costly. The cost of a paint job never turns out at the price you've estimated and the added cost of the small things you run into just nickels and dimes you to death. Same with avionics. Plus, the logistics of ferrying the plane from paint shop to avionics, etc. Interiors are also time-consuming. Custom scribing and molding pieces that add to the bill quickly. Same goes for the custom leather upholstery. All these processes turned out to be just as expensive as an engine rebuild, but they just take three to four times longer."

Jai Pena and his girlfirend, Lori Petrie, with N64450.

**Above:** N64450 in its old, basic blue and white paint scheme.

**Right:** Skyworld Aviation stripped Jai's Skyhawk to bare metal and applied an anti-corrosion primer.

**Below right:** The hardware for all the moving parts on the airframe was repaced with stainless steel.

Jai's first step in the restoration of 64450 was to have Dave Carter at West Side Aviation in Manassas, Virginia, review the mechanics of the airframe. He borescoped the engine; replaced the motor mounts, battery, flaps guides and bearings, hoses, tires, brakes, plugs, engine hoses; changed all the exterior plastic pieces; and installed new LED lights.

"From there I flew the plane to Warrenton to Skyworld Aviation where Jerry Lane and Ron Gatewood stripped the plane to the bare metal, looked for corrosion, which they luckily didn't find, and then they applied anti-corrosion primers and a few coats of heavy paint," Jai said.

Jai and his girlfriend, Lori Petrie, chose the Skyhawk's paint scheme after looking at possibilities online and in magazines. Skyworld applied the navy and gold vinyl graphics and replaced the hardware for all of the moving parts and panels with stainless steel parts. The shop also added new placards and removed all the interior plastics and upholstery. The process took 7 months from January 2019 to the end of July 2019.

"[The] biggest challenge was the interior," Jai said. "I had to buy the fire retardant certified leather in the states, then take the old upholstery pieces along with the new leather to Colombia to the upholstery shop where they cut the stitches out of the old set and traced and copied all pieces and fabricated the new interior. Then I carried all the pieces in a suitcase and flew them back to Virginia for installation.

N64450 next went to Easton, Maryland, and Randy Cox at West Air Aviation.

"[It had] no interior at all, only a single seat with no upholstery on it," Jai said of the airplane's condition at the time.

West Air installed the custom panel and installed all the avionics. When Jai bought the airplane it had just a single Narco MK12D nav/comm with OBS and a Garmin GTX 327 transponder. The new avionics include a Garmin audio panel, G-530 WAAS nav/comm, G-430 WAAS nav/comm dual Garmin 106 OBS dual antennas, marker beacon antenna,

**Above:** The interior had only the pilot's seat when Jai bought it, making checking for corrosion and priming easier.

**Top Right:** New stainless steel ailerons.

**Bottom Right:** N64450 stripped to bare, shiny metal.

## RESOURCES:

**Penn Yan Aero**
***www.pennyanaero.com***

**Skyworld Aviation**

**West Air Aviation**
***Westairesn.com***

**West Side Aviation**
***www.westsideaviation.com***

**Above:** The navy and gold paint scheme was applied using vinyl by Skyworld Aviation.

new Garmin GTX 345 ADS-B In and Out, and new Stratus USB ports. In early September 2019 Jai flew the plane back to Skyworld to install the new plastic interior and the new all-leather upholstery.

"We are about 75% done with the process," Jai said in October 2019. "The only thing left to do is the door upholstery panels were done too small in Colombia so I had to make new ones."

Although his Skyhawk was in the shop for a large portion of 2019, Jai was able to continue flying throughout the year thanks to his second set of wings.

"After I was bitten by the flying bug again, I went crazy and between 2018 and the spring of 2019 I ended up buying three more Cessnas 172s — a 1976 N model, another 1974 M model (this one with a partner), and a 2002 172 SP — with the idea of putting three on lease-back contracts with flight schools," he said. "Unfortunately the lease backs didn't work out at all. One (the N model) got totaled by a student. The M model that I owned with a partner also got wrecked, but after a long battle and painful process, we were able to get it fixed, and I just sold my part to my partner. The newer SP model was doing OK at a school in Florida, but not good enough to recoup the investment so I ended up selling that one to a school in California and getting completely out of the lease-back business. After all of this, I ended up buying a C-182 Millennium edition that I currently own and plan to keep."

Now that N64450's restoration is nearing completion, Jai said he plans to keep it as well to pass along to his son.

# 40 Tips: Owner Advice

These Cessna Skyhawk owners have offered this advice to help you enjoy your plane safely and affordably. Join in the conversation on our forums, and submit your advice at *cessnaowner.org/submissions*.

Test flight after an annual at Chesapeake Regional Airport (CPK).

David and his kids, Keegan and Radleigh, on Block Island.

David and his co-pilot, Keegan.

David's plane enjoying Nassau (Radleigh walking towards the plane).

The low-profile panel is full, from pilot to passenger. Mostly steam gauges but fully IFR equipped.

## David Herschel

## 1957 Cessna 172

**Special or Unique Features**

"STOL"

**What is the biggest ongoing challenge with this aircraft?**

1 "The biggest ongoing challenge is that there are leaks in the pitot static system."

**What is the best reason to fly this aircraft?**

"This aircraft lands anywhere and is very forgiving."

**What is your advice to somebody who's considering buying this model?**

2 "Straight tail is the only way to go. The large empennage makes it very responsive to yoke and rudder input."

Walter's plane on the runway at the Seward, Alaska (PAWD) airport.

## Walter Corrigan
## 1971 Cessna 172B

**Special or Unique Features**
"My 172B has a Mid-Continent STOL, Patroller windows and 8.50x6 Tires."

**What was your most-recent upgrade? What would you recommend to others related to that project?**
3 "I upgraded to a Stratus ESG for ADS-B Out compliance. I recommend you do it now."

**What is the biggest ongoing challenge with this aircraft?**
4 "My biggest challenge with this model is weight issues."

**What is the best reason to fly this aircraft?**
5 "It's inexpensive to own and maintain."

**What is your advice to somebody who's considering buying this model?**
6 "Get a good pre-buy and go over the logbooks with a fine-tooth comb."

## Andy Anderson
## 1977 Cessna 172N
### Mena, Arkansas

**Special or Unique Features**
"Just installed a JPI EDM900."

**What is the biggest ongoing challenge with this aircraft?**
"I don't have any challenges with this aircraft."

**What is your advice to somebody who's considering buying this model?**
7 "This aircraft has inexpensive operating costs."

Andy Anderson's 1977 Cessna 172.

A snapshot of the new panel installed in Earle's C-172.

## Earle Richardson
## 1966 Cessna 172

**Special or Unique Features**
"This is a 50-year-old plane with new panel."

**What was your most-recent upgrade?**
"I upgraded from two Aspens to an Aspen Max avionics panel."

**What is the biggest ongoing challenge with this aircraft?**
"At the age of 81, the only challenge I have is getting it in and out of the hangar."

**What is the best reason to fly this aircraft?**
"The best reason to fly the C-172 is because it's FUN."

# Mark Nevins
## 1967 Cessna 172

Member Mark Nevins loves his 1967 Cessna 172 and has worked to make it a no-fuss, almost-no-maintenance flying machine that is practical and affordable.

Advice from Nevins:

8. "Make sure that it has the spin-on oil filter conversion STC and alternator." Nevins' spin-on conversion kit for his Continental O-300D is from Tempest (www.tempestplus.com).
9. He has an STC for MoGas (there is one available from Petersen Aviation).
10. He recommends an upgraded 14v/50-amp alternator (Plane Power generator to alternator kits are available from Aircraft Spruce, and they also have a Jasco alternator kit).
11. Nevins also loves his Stratus ESG ADS-B transponder.
12. He has a ram mount on his yoke for his iPad Mini 4, which runs his Foreflight Pro.
13. He has made multiple other improvements, including LED lights and a halogen beacon, new circuit breakers, 406 MHz ELT, and the like.
14. Nevins likes the benefits of the Continental O-300D. "Having the low-set camshaft and pushrods, yes, it will leak like a Harley, but that cam is going to get really lubricated," Nevins said. "That's why Lycomings need cam guards. You don't need that with a Continental O-300D. And there will be moisture in the oil if you don't fly that often because there's crankcase moisture. You have to fly an airplane every week, and change the oil. But the spin-on conversion ups the oil change interval to 50 hours, which is really awesome."

Overall, he said his plane is very smooth, fast enough, and most importantly, economical at 6.5 gallons per hour. "This airplane moves along really good," he said. "And it's not really that much slower than a regular 180-hp. That will get you off the ground faster, but with the way that I load my airplane, I don't put people back there. I treat it like a 150 or 152. If you want more people than that, that's what a 182 is for."

All photos provided by Mark Nevins

# Lawrence Gettleman
## 1977 Cessna 172N

**Special or Unique Features**

"Features new paint and windows, GTN 750 & GL 30, King DME, ~1800 TT, ~1180 engine, and was Miss January 2018 in the COO calendar."

**What was your most-recent upgrade?**

"GTN 750 & GDL 30."

**What is the biggest ongoing challenge with this aircraft?**

"It needs a new voltage regulator and 406 ELT."

**What is the best reason to fly this aircraft?**

"The best reasons to fly the C-172N is because it's fun and stable. I fly this model also for the pride of ownership. I am saving it for my 14-year-old grandson."

**What is your advice to somebody who's considering buying this model?**

15 "Make sure to check for corrosion, rattles, windows and ADs."

**Above and Below:** Lawrence Gettleman's 1977 Cessna 172N

*Photographer: Megan Laubhen*
**Above**: The new interior in N3251L.

**Below:** Gunner Wiles' 1967 172H on a private strip near Salina Regional Airport (KSLN) in Salina, Kansas.

# Gunner Wiles
## 1967 Cessna 172H

**What are your three top tips for people who own or are considering buying this model?**

16 If you are ever interrupted during a preflight, start over.

17 When you have passengers and you are briefing them on opening the door, have them practice it.

18 Cover the fuel vent tube when the aircraft is stored. It will prevent bugs like mud daubers from making a nest.

**What is special or unique about your airplane?**
It has fresh paint, a fresh overhaul, and new interior.

**What was your most-recent upgrade?**
I installed the uAvionix tailBeacon for ADS-B Out.

**What is the biggest ongoing challenge with this airplane?**

19 Controlling oil leaks.

**What is the best reason to fly this aircraft?**
To see the looks on children's faces during their first flight.

**What is your advice to someone who's considering buying this model?**

20 Grab it. It's the last year of the Continental O-300 engine. It's a super smooth engine and it's STC'd for mogas.

## Art Gentry
## 1974 Cessna 172M

**What are your three top tips for people who own or are considering buying this model?**

21 Get an oil filter kit.
22 Get the oil changed religiously.
23 Get the Airtex seat replacement kit.

**What was your most-recent upgrade? How did it go? What would you recommend to others related to that project?**

24 Just upgraded to Aspen G5 with a TruTrak autopilot and Garmin 300XL. It went reasonably well. Had to get a software update on the G5 to get it to talk to the TruTrak well. Hire a good avionics shop that knows all the products you're installing. Mine made some great suggestions that have really paid off

**What is the best reason to fly this aircraft?**

It's stable and reliable. If you take care of it, it will last forever!

**What is your advice to somebody who's considering buying this model?**

25 Watch for wrinkled firewall and indications of a hard nose wheel landing or prop strike.

## Kenneth Peppard
## 1980 Cessna 172

**What are your three top tips for people who own or are considering buying this model?**

26 The H2AD engine will run well beyond TBO when maintained with oil, filter, and required Lycoming additive.
27 Do preventive maintenance to repair/update the magneto/wiring harness, carburetor, and engine mounts, and balance the propeller to minimize any vibration.
28 Avoid cold weather starts without heating the oil and cylinders.

**What is special or unique about your airplane?**

I'm the original owner and the aircraft has been in its hangar all but 10 months since new. That has made a big difference.

**What was your most recent upgrade? How did it go?**

29 Installed a panel-mounted ADS-B In and Out with new digital Mode C. Added USB power port and changed the ELT to 406 MHz. Make sure what you select is compatible with any planned future upgrades. Do the individual install once rather than redo it to accommodate additions.

**What is the best reason to fly this aircraft?**

30 Of the five airplanes I've owned/flown regularly (Cessna 150, Cessna 172, Cessna 182, Piper PA-30, Bonanza V35A), the 172 has been the most affordable, reliable, and easiest to maintain.

My 1980 C172N Skyhawk II has been hangared since new. Windows and paint are original except for the nose cowl and wing struts being repainted in 2008. The wheelpants are removed and stored to prevent damage from grass and winter operations.

31 It can adequately handle three people, full fuel, and some baggage for virtually any trip.
32 Parts are readily available and all A&Ps can fix it for a nominal cost.

**What is your advice to somebody who's considering buying this model?**

33 The 172N using the 160-hp Lycoming O-320-H2AD engine with 9-to-1 compression is a very nice airplane. An early oil gallery issue was fixed and the Bendix D2000 mag internals updated to make it a smooth, highly reliable engine that offers an airplane that performs well.

# Griff Pickett

## 1976 Cessna 172

**What are your three top tips for people who own or are considering buying this model?**

34 Fly often, I try to never let more than 3 weeks go by without an hour logged.

35 Maintain it properly. This includes oil changes with analysis.

36 Don't wonder or worry about strange sounds, readings, etc. — seek assistance quickly.

**Above:** My wife, Janet, and I at the 2019 COO fly-in. Photo by Scott Sherer

**Left:** N7328T at Mexico Memorial Airport (MYJ) in Mexico, Missouri.

**What is special or unique about your airplane?**

This Cessna sat for a long time back in the 1980s, Continental O-300 had a forced major in the '90s, and since then had 200 hours on it. I flew just under 100 hours this year and I'm loving every flight!

**What was your most recent upgrade? How did it go?**

Changed out the aftermarket portable intercom with an Aerocom from PS Engineering. Expensive, but top notch.

**What is the biggest ongoing challenge with this aircraft?**

37 Keeping up with all the $50 to $300 parts that are just old, outdated, and hard to find.

**What is the best reason to fly this aircraft?**

With a STOL kit, it has never scared me. Well, when I went out to practice stalls last month, it scared me that it still was going into a departure stall when the airspeed dropped below 40 mph! It's safe and easy to fly.

**What is your advice to someone who's considering buying this model?**

38 Unless you like vintage, get an E model or better. There are more STCs available for the notch-back 172s.

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# Shawn Cook

## 1967 Cessna 172

**What is special or unique about your airplane?**

It's my first plane and a fulfillment of a lifelong dream to be a pilot. I joined the military in 1988 at 17 with a goal to eventually become a pilot. I found out I was colorblind so there went that dream. After retiring in 2009 from a 21-year career, I ended up buying a house next to a small airport. While at a community meeting at the airport, a pilot told me that there are limitations for colorblind pilots, but I could still become a private pilot. The rest is history!

*Snoopy* tied down outside its hangar.

**What's the biggest ongoing challenge with this airplane?**

It's an older model so things tend to break. It's also a bit underpowered. But it's less expensive to maintain since there are a lot of them. It's a real workhorse!

**What's your advice to someone interested in this type?**

Cessna 172s are forgiving and easy to fly. If you're getting 39 your certificate later in your life, the 172 is a good plane.

**Have you made any recent upgrades or refurbishments?**

Engine replacement, ADS-B In and Out, shoulder harnesses, and a Garmin G5. I'll be adding a JP Instruments EDM 900 once the engine is done.

**Were there any challenges you'd like to share?**

I just had a catastrophic engine failure. Going through an engine 40 replacement on this model was a challenge. I wanted to upgrade the engine, but earlier models require very expensive STCs if you want to deviate from the O-300. With O-300 demands, earlier models will be an issue for engine replacements unless a cheaper mod/STC option is available.