

KR fly in to be held

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MT. VERNON — Planes will be filling the Mt. Vernon airways for the eighth KR gathering at the end of the month. The KR fly in will have about 10 to 20 aircrafts coming in, featuring planes designed and built by people from over 30 states and around the world. The KR gathering is also celebrating the 40th anniversary of the first flight of the KR aircraft.

Larry Flesner, the host of the KR gathering, said he is one of the few people in the immediate area with a KR aircraft, but hundreds have been built around the country and overseas as well.

"It [the KR plane] kind of revolutionized the home built airplane," Flesner said. "It was one of the first to use fiber glass to build the plane. The design has evolved considerably over the years."

The KR aircraft were designed by Ken Rand and Stu Robinson in 1972. The two engineers, who were working for McDonald Aircraft in California when they met, pioneered a foam and fiberglass composite construction method that is now the standard in home-built, commercial and military

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aircraft, according to information from Rand Robinson Aviation. The strength to weight ratio of the construction and the composite material make it easy to shape compound curves that produce fast, clean surfaces that a novice aircraft builder can master, and the aviation company states the KR is lightweight and trailerable.

Flesner said the aircraft are relatively easy to build, although the construction does take some time. He added the main draw of the KR aircraft is the speed and the cost of the aircraft.

"You have to make all the pieces," he said. "It's basically constructed out of wood and it's got foam that is sanded down and fiberglass. Anybody that is handy with basic tools can build one. It's probably about 1,500 to 2,000 hours worth of build time."

The gathering is a time for KR owners and enthusi-

asts to compare notes on building kits, attend forums on constructing aircraft and engines and a general sharing of information, Flesner said. The weekend gathering will end with a banquet where a people's choice award will be handed out, and attendees will have the chance to win a trophy for the best. KR aircraft and sub-awards such as farthest traveled or best engine or interior, Flesner said.

"It's almost as much of a social event as a gathering," he said.

There are currently about 80 people signed up to attend the gathering, which will begin Thursday, Sept. 27, when the planes will begin flying in and end Saturday, Sept. 29.

"We are grateful for the excellent support from the airport and Chris Collins and the city," Flesner said. "The facilities and support we get here at Mt. Vernon is why we come back every year."

For more information on the KR gathering, visit www.krgathering.org.

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