

Scott Johnson
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Date: July 16, 2024

Subject: WPR24LA160 / Phone conversation

Contact: [REDACTED] Previous owner N873X

The following is a synopsis of the information provided by the previous owner of N873X in a telephone conversation.

I co-owned the Skeen Skybolt with [REDACTED] for approximately 3.5 years. We sold the aircraft due to anticipated maintenance work and associated costs. I currently fly an RV aircraft. I flew competition aerobatics in my 20s and am currently 70 years old with approximately 4,500 total flight hours. I particularly enjoyed performing basic aerobatic maneuvers in the Skybolt.

When [REDACTED] arrived to take possession of the aircraft, he brought two individuals with him, including a mechanic who inspected the engine. The mechanic performed a compression check and borescope inspection and indicated that, while some work would be needed, the engine was operating adequately at that time.

We accepted a lower sale price than the original asking price due to the upcoming maintenance requirements and expected costs.

I advised [REDACTED] that I typically did not fly the aircraft for more than 30 minutes at a time. Given the longer cross-country flight he was planning and the aircraft's fuel burn at higher power settings, I recommended flying at a reduced airspeed for improved fuel economy. I also advised him to plan a fuel stop at San Luis Obispo County Regional Airport (KSBP) and to minimize maneuvering by maintaining straight-and-level flight to conserve fuel.

After the flight, [REDACTED] contacted me and described his planned route and distance. Based on the information he provided and the aircraft's typical fuel

consumption, my initial concern was that the engine may have stopped due to fuel exhaustion.

At the time of sale, the engine and fuel system were straightforward in configuration and were operating normally to the best of my knowledge. We did not use the upper tank (configured for smoke fluid or fuel); we operated the aircraft using the main (lower) tank.

During certain inverted maneuvers (e.g., slow rolls or point rolls), the main tank would vent or seep fuel at the filler cap, and the odor of fuel was noticeable. I informed [REDACTED] of this condition and demonstrated it to him. I did not observe this issue during normal upright flight.

The lower tank capacity was approximately 30-32 gallons. We created and calibrated a fuel dipstick in one-gallon increments. For aerobatic operations, we typically flew with approximately 25 gallons on board.

At full-throttle power settings, fuel consumption could be as high as approximately 16 gallons per hour. Airspeed has a significant impact on fuel burn; for example, the difference between operating at approximately 120 mph versus 160 mph is substantial.



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Date: March 30, 2026
Subject: WPR24LA160 / Phone conversation
Contact: [REDACTED] Pilot N873X

The following is a synopsis of the information provided by the pilot of N873X in a telephone conversation.

The pilot stated that the airplane remained upside down 3-4 hours after the accident prior to hiring a recovery crew to upright the airplane. During that time the airplane leaked a significant amount of fuel out of the fuel cap while it was inverted. The pilot expressed that he believed he did not run out of fuel.