

Local flight school to add simulator training

LOCK HAVEN — Recognizing that gaining and maintaining pilot proficiency requires consistent flying and frequent practice, AvSport of Lock Haven, the sport flight school on the Piper Memorial Airport, is adding a modern simulator to its flight line.

Airlines and the military have long recognized that flight simulators play an important role in both the acquisition and retention of flying skills.

Unfortunately, the FAA-certified full-motion training devices they employ are priced on a par with the average General Aviation airplane well beyond the resources of AvSport, or most other small flight schools.

At the other end of the spectrum, many pilots have found flight simulation video games on a personal computer useful in reviewing procedures and maintaining a semblance of flight currency when the weather isn't fit for flying. Free-flight mode on such a device allows you to punch holes in the sky and enjoy some of the pleasurable aspects of flight. But, without structured curriculum and scenario-based training tools, flying a personal computer is of questionable educational value.

AvSport has embraced a middle ground, thanks to the introduction by the Airport Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) of the Jay flight simulator from Redbird. The Jay is definitely not an FAA approved training device, which means it can't be used for logging hours or approaches toward a rating, or for meeting legal currency requirements. It is, however, a scenario-based training system which allows the student (or the licensed pilot, or the prospective flyer) to test his or her skills in a variety of aircraft, flying a variety of routes, under varying weather conditions, with the machine providing constant visual, tactile, and verbal feedback.

In other words, the Jay is the ideal electronic combination of aircraft, airspace, and flight instructor. And, although hours spent flying the Jay don't count toward your license, they promise to reduce in-aircraft training time by helping you to gain proficiency in the tasks you find most challenging. After all, it isn't hours in the logbook, but rather skill with the stick, that really counts.

Aircraft that the Jay will let you fly in simulation include AvSport's own Evektor SportStar primary trainer, the historic Piper J3 Cub (produced right here in Lock Haven!), the ubiquitous Cessna Skyhawk, the Mooney Bravo high-performance complex single, an Extra 300 championship-class aerobatic monoplane, the Cessna Grand Caravan cargo hauler, a Beechcraft Baron piston

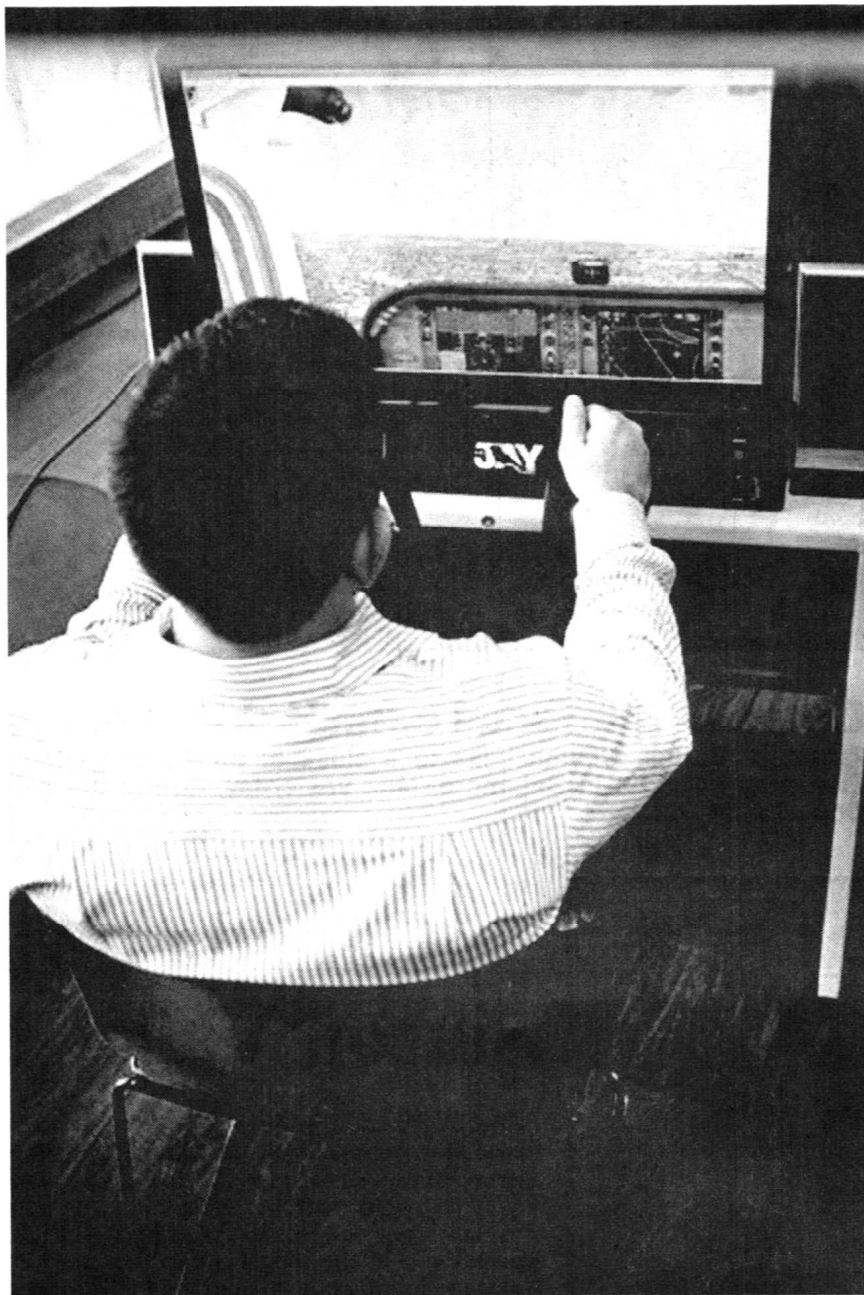


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The AvSport Simulator Club will use the AOPA Jay flight simulator by Redbird.

twin, the Beechcraft King Air twin turboprop, an antique Republic Seabee amphibian, and even the classic Lockheed Constellation four-engine airliner. You can equip your virtual panel with anything from simple round gauges to the most advanced Garmin 1000 glass cockpit.

Like a gym or country club membership, AvSport seeks to make unlimited simulator use available to interested pilots and prospects for a flat annual fee. Simulator Club annual membership dues will be priced at the cost of just a single hour of flight time in a primary trainer aircraft.

The simulator is being installed in the Pilot Briefing room, Hangar One at the Piper Memorial Airport, so it will be available for use any time during normal airport business

hours (currently 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays, and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekends).

A free introductory Simulator Club membership will be provided to all student pilots enrolled in one of AvSport's intensive training courses.

The Sport Pilot license, in which AvSport specializes, is the newest portal of entry into the world of aviation, allowing prospective pilots to become licensed in half the time, and at half the cost, of the traditional Private Pilot license. Modern Light Sport aircraft allow pilots to recapture the bygone fly-for-fun Cub era, with increased reliability and improved safety.

Aspiring Sport Pilots are invited to browse AvSport's extensive website, <http://AvSport.org>, for a wealth of free training material.