



## Dr. Arthur Peterson The Politics of Flying

He was only 13 when he agreed to help some older boys build a Flying Flea, a small amateur-built airplane. After all, the complete construction plans had been published in an issue of Popular Mechanics, so there was no earthly reason to imagine anything could stop them. Except, maybe, a world war. The older boys working on the aircraft project joined the Army Air Corps, leaving young Art Peterson with an incomplete airplane and a lifelong lust for flying.

After his undergrad work at Yale and post-grad studies in Chicago and Minnesota, Peterson became the youngest legislator in the nation when he was elected to serve the people of Wisconsin. Next, he became chairman of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, charged with the responsibility for investigating and reporting on civil-rights issues. His new charge included crisscrossing the country in a Skyhawk!

From that moment forward, Peterson has continued to keep airplanes in his life. When he was the president of Thunderbird Graduate School for International Management, it was a Cessna 182 that was parked outside his office door, not a car. In Florida, Peterson built a single-pilot Mini Max. On a test flight, the engine quit over the Gulf of Mexico and Peterson had to ditch. It surprised no one that Peterson nonchalantly swam ashore, but many were surprised to see him dragging his airplane behind him!

Peterson moved to Montana and, once again, got himself elected to the legislature. He bought a Cessna to travel back and forth across the state, doing his constituents' bidding. In his spare time (!), he started construction on an Acro Duster.

Now 81 years young, Dr. Arthur Peterson is serving up aviation to a younger generation as president of the Thomas W. Wathen Academy at the historic Flabob Airport in Riverside, Calif. He's well past the midway point in building his Cavalier, a two-seat, low-wing nosedragger, but he concedes that it won't be ready in time for the Republican National Convention this September in St. Paul, Minn. So he'll fly himself up there in his Skylane!

Peterson's plans include a run for the California legislature. If he wins, he will become the first person in history to have served in the legislatures of three different states. And, you guessed it: He'll be campaigning from his airplane!