

Autogyro Revolutions

Apparently not content with the multitude of world records he has set since his first record attempt in 2003, Andrew Keech got back to work in February 2006.

Between February 9 and February 14, Keech set new records for *Distance Over a Closed Course Without Landing*, *Speed over a 500 km Closed Course*, *Speed Over a 1,000 km Closed Course*, *Time to Climb to 3,000 Meters*, and *Altitude*. NAA recognized his final accomplishment in 2006 as a "Most Memorable."

Keech celebrated Valentine's Day in "Woodstock," his yellow Little Wing LW5 Autogyro named for Snoopy's winged pal, by pushing the autogyro record for *Distance Without Landing* to 672.89 miles. That's a 76 percent improvement over the previous record of 380.50 miles set in 1989, representing tremendous progress in the sport, much

of it driven by Keech. On the same flight, he set three other important records.

"There are four types of performance records in aviation: two are horizontal, two are vertical," says Keech. "They boil down to how fast and how far: speed and distance on the horizontal axis; rate of climb and altitude on the vertical. Very few aircraft have ever set records in all four, and one of them is my machine. It dawned on me that I could design a flight so that I set the speed record, the distance record, the climb record, and the altitude record all on the same flight, and I just couldn't resist it. So I did it."

Keech now holds nearly all of the important autogyro records: If he pops up in a future NAA list of Most Memorable records for his autogyro achievements, it will likely be for chasing after his own legacy.

"Setting all four on one flight was a bit of an indulgence: When it comes to setting records, I'm a bit of a pig," says Keech. "The straight line distance record will be broken — in fact I improved it myself by about 200 miles a few weeks ago in a flight that is still being ratified by NAA — but setting all four performance records in one flight is what made that 2006 flight so significant to me."

Keech and Ron Herron of Little Wing Autogyros designed Woodstock specifically to improve world records in the autogyro category. Keech notes that the aircraft weighs "about the same as a medium-sized motorcycle." So what's next for Keech? We like this answer from the Frequently Asked Questions section at www.littlewingwonder.com: "I only mention a record after it has been made. Events in the future do not exist 'til they are in the past."

Andrew Keech and "Woodstock" now hold nearly every aviation record in the Autogyro class.



Photo by Nathan Rohrbaugh