

GIMPY

SUMMER 2009

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF STUMPS "R" US
A WHIMSICAL SUPPORT GROUP OF CHEERFUL CRIPPLES
WHO CAN ANSWER ALMOST ANY QUESTION YOU MIGHT HAVE
ABOUT LIFE WITHOUT ONE, TWO, THREE OR FOUR LIMBS.

ARMLESS PILOT'S GOAL IS TO INSPIRE OTHERS

MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER SAYS LACK OF FAITH IN SELF IS ONLY TRUE DISABILITY



Standing on a bright-blue 1946 Ercoupe 415C airplane at Ray Blair Airport in San Manuel, northeast of Tucson, Cox uses her left foot to place a clipboard on the wing. Attached is a list of 30 things she must do before flying, including checking the oil, making sure there is no wing damage and checking the gas level. She ticks off each item with a pencil she holds with her right foot.

"I like it when it's less windy, but this plane can handle 20 knots," she says. "The manufacturers of this plane wanted to make it simple, use the concept of driving and apply it to a plane. But it's still the most difficult thing I've ever done."

The first time she piloted a plane, Jessica Cox had a memory flash from first grade, when she couldn't swing on the monkey bars or climb the ladders to the tall slides on the playground. She spent most of her time in the sandbox, imagining she was Superwoman flying over the playground and taking her friends one at a time for a flight.

"It shows you the power of the imagination," she says. "The imagination with intention." Throughout her life, Cox has impressed people with her ability to negotiate without arms. But she has attracted some international fame with her latest achievement: earning a Federal Aviation Administration sport pilot's license. The 2005 University of Arizona graduate also has started her own company, and the product she sells is herself.

She already has spent about 25 hours doing solo flights without instructor Parrish Traweek. Her goal is to reach 150 hours and become a sport pilot instructor.

In the cockpit and ready to take off, Cox puts her left foot on the throttle and her right foot on the yoke, then checks her headphones and the radio. The propeller now makes a loud "thrum." She fixes her eyes forward, and the tiny plane motors up into the blue, cloud dotted sky.

"I want to teach other people how to fly, people with disabilities," says Cox, 26, who travels around the state giving talks to businesses, school groups and clubs.

Her company is called Jessica Cox Motivational Services; the Web site is at www.rightfooted.com "I always knew I was here to help people," she adds.

Her family says no one has been able to explain