

## Reaching New Heights with The Jersey Shore Ultralights



Rich Murray

**One of the many participants in the Jersey Shore Ultralights Club annual Summer Fly In event.**

Many children dream of flying an airplane when they grow up, but most of the time, the dream dies as the years pass by. For members of the Jersey Shore Ultralights Chapter of the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA), however, the dream is as alive today as it was when they were younger, except now, they are living the dream.

The Jersey Shore Ultralights Chapter is a local group of about forty aviation enthusiasts, aircraft restorers, and pilots with a passion for flying and fun. They share ideas and information, promote safety, and serve the local aviation community. Chapter president Garry Donohue has been an aviation enthusiast since he was seven years old, when a neighbor gave him a ride on a sightseeing plane out of Asbury Park Airport, which is now closed. "After that, I fell in love with flying," he said.

At eighteen years old, Donohue received his pilot's license, but could not afford to purchase his own plane. He rented ultralight aircrafts from the Jackson Flight Center, located on Route 527, which was the original home of the Jersey Shore Ultralights Club. Eventually,

he earned his Ultralight Flight Certificate and was able to purchase an inexpensive Ultralight with a partner. When the Jackson Flight Center closed, he became President of the Club. "I enjoy the type of flying that I, and many others, can afford," Donahue said.

An "Ultralight" aircraft is lightweight with one or two seats. According to the EAA, flying Ultralights is not a step up or down from flying other types of aircrafts, but a step into an entirely different flying community. It is highly recommended that aspiring Ultralight pilots and owners receive training before flying or purchasing an Ultralight aircraft.

According to Donohue, two sur-



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**A Hiperlight is one of the many types of Ultralight aircrafts on display at the Jersey Shore Ultralights Club annual Summer Fly In event in June.**

prising facts about Ultralight aircrafts are that they are about the cost of a small car, versus the expense of purchasing a small plane, and that they are very easy to fly. Donohue explained, "They are as safe as a regular airplane, and are built with many of the same nuts and bolts as larger, more expensive planes. They fly about seventy-miles-per-hour and for about two hours on a full tank of gas. You can use auto gas, which also keeps the costs down."

With regards to safety, Donohue recommends for Ultralight pilots to fly within his or her ability, and not to fly in poor weather. He urges all Ultralight owners to keep their aircraft mechanically safe with proper preventative maintenance.

Donohue currently owns two Ultralight aircrafts. One is a Phantom aircraft, and one is called a Hiperlight, which he built himself. Donohue suggests that anyone who is interested in aviation to take a ride in a plane or an Ultralight...that ride might be life-changing, as it was for him when he was a child.

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*Anyone who flies, builds, or simply enjoys aviation or Ultralight aircrafts is welcome to attend one of the Jersey Shore Ultralight Chapter meetings or events. A pilot's license is not needed for membership. Chapter meetings are held at 7:30 PM on the last Monday of each month at the Brick Civic Plaza Strip Mall, 270 Chambers Bridge Road, Brick. Additionally, the club holds a yearly "Fly In" barbecue and celebration every June. Annual dues are \$25. For more information, visit [www.jerseyshoreultralights.org](http://www.jerseyshoreultralights.org) or contact chapter president Garry Donohue by email at [garryfly@aol.com](mailto:garryfly@aol.com). Aviation and Ultralight enthusiasts can also learn more about or join the EAA by visiting their website at [www.eaa.com](http://www.eaa.com).*

—Jill M. Ocone