

# U S U A FLYING CLUB 1 NEWSLETTER

April 1987

## FROM THE LEFT SEAT

by Steve Osten

At last month's meeting, as promised, I passed around a sign-up sheet to try to get a feeling for who's interested in what and who's willing to put a little effort into what he's interested in. The following is what I got:

### Cross-Country Trips

\*Rob Brooke  
\*Paul McClung  
\*Jim Kelly  
\*Bob Breeden  
\*Steve Osten  
Rick Matson  
David Hiers  
Jim Laurenson  
(\* - Willing to plan/host  
a trip)

### Competition

Jim Kelly

### Basic Training

\*Jim Kelly  
Rob Brooke  
Paul McClung  
Dick Walker  
Lawrence Frierson  
(\* - Instructor)

### COLIBRI Badge Program

\*Rob Brooke  
\*Jim Kelly  
Rick Matson  
David Hiers  
Steve Osten  
(\* - COLIBRI Observer)

### Advanced Training

\*Jim Kelly  
David Hiers  
(\* - Instructor)

### USUF Pilot/Plane Registration

\*Rob Brooke  
\*Jim Kelly  
David Hiers  
Jim Laurenson  
Steve Osten  
(\* - USUF Examiner)

This is an incomplete list, since it only represents the attendees at one meeting. If there's something here you'd like to get behind, be sure and get in touch with me to get your name on the list. Just as an aside, **everyone** who's flying and is a member of the Club is, by definition, interested in USUF Registration if he's not already registered. Getting your name on any of these lists will put you in line to be notified when anything is being planned in any of these areas, so speak up. My number is (703)644-5514. Give me a call and get signed up.

Fly Safely!

\* \* \* \* \*

## ADVISORIES

Check your NEWSLETTER label! If there's a dollar sign (\$) by your name, your Editor thinks you haven't paid your dues. This NEWSLETTER is the last one which will go out before the 1987 address list purge. If your dues aren't received sometime before April 20th, these comforting pages will stop arriving at your door each month. If you've paid your dues and there's been some kind of goof, call Rob Brooke, (301)279-2816, and we'll get things straightened out.

Now check your wallet! Are you carrying your USUF Pilot registration card? If you aren't, and it's because you aren't registered yet, then you should be doing something about that now. Your friendly Editor and flying buddy, Rob Brooke, has taken the Examiner's seminar and is now a USUF Examiner who can help you remedy that deficiency. To achieve Nirvana, you are expected to take a written, oral and flying test and send evidence of completion together with a small amount of money to USUF. Believe me, friend, if you will have difficulty with any of the three tests, you have no business flying in public. Call Rob or any of the other Club Examiners and make an appointment to take care of this soon. You will garner both respect and insurability at one and the same time.

Through the kind offices of Paul McClung, Whitman Strip has been provided with a couple of major heavy-duty garbage cans for refuse collection. Garbage bag liners are available (with ties) in the right-hand drawer of the desk in "the office". All users of the field are encouraged to use the cans for refuse and, should a can be full, volunteer to tie up the bag and cart it off to your favorite disposal location, replacing the full bag with a fresh empty one, of course. Members who base their planes at the field should contact Paul to contribute their share to the cost of the cans.

A bulletin board is mounted in "the office" at Whitman Strip. Visitors and flyers (especially) are asked to consult it whenever they're at the field. If your Editor ever gets his act together, you will find usage rules for the field posted there, along with parking suggestions and a description of restricted areas - places to avoid while airborne.

## 1987 SCHEDULE

Program Chairman Paul McClung has finalized the year's schedule. These are the events which USUA Flying Club #1 is officially sponsoring during the upcoming season. There will doubtless be occasional ad hoc events which get planned and undertaken as the season progresses, but here's the schedule you can count on. Save the schedule and save the dates!

April 25 - The first Club Cross-country jaunt, will take us to Orange County Airport and lunch at the airport restaurant. All Club Cross-countries are being planned for Saturday so that Sunday can be used if the weather is inclement.

May 2/3 - EAA 186 Winchester Fly-in, an official USUA #1 Cross-country. We'll plan to go Saturday.

June 27/28 - Whitman Strip Campout and Fly-in. EAA 186 has been invited and has placed Sunday, the 28th, on their schedule as a Fly-in.

July - A tour of the National Air and Space Museum's Garber Facility is planned for July. The date will be announced as soon as the arrangements are made.

August 16 - Whitman Strip Fly-in.

September 19 - Club Cross-country.

October 31 - Halloween-Costumed Fly-in and Season-end party. Come and see the Club's own Flying Gorilla. Don't see him yet? Have another beer!

### PLAYING YOUR HAND

Safety viewed through analogy  
by Tom Simmons

I am inclined to believe that people generally examine the merits of a safety issue, adopt a practice and then stick with that practice in all situations. Like whether or not they should wear seatbelts in a car. In other words, their safety decisions are made outside the context of any actual situation.

I would like to propose an alternative critical method for adopting safety procedures in flying.

The thing that is most conspicuous in nearly all flying accidents (or incidents), even in commercial aviation, is that there is more than one cause. It isn't just windshear, it's windshear combined with a low altitude and low airspeed. In another instance, it isn't just a snowstorm, it's the snowstorm and the inexperience of the pilot and a faulty gauge.

The fact that flying accidents are so frequently caused by "deadly combinations" means that safety decisions should always be made in context. In fact, in the context of that specific flying situation. Of course, if we all adhered to the strictest interpretation of every safety rule, there would be no problem. But let's be honest, we all cheat a little from time to time.

So here's a little analogy which has helped me to clarify some of my flying decisions. Imagine yourself and the Grim Reaper playing a game of cards (okay, so I used to watch a lot of Bergman films as a kid). At the beginning of the game, you have all the cards in your hand. And every time you make a compromising judgement call, you give a few cards away to Old Sourpuss. Tires low? That's a card or two. Muddy runway? A couple of more little cards. Is it a short runway? The cards are getting bigger. Trees and a powerline at the end of it? Fork over a lot of cards. And you

say you can't remember when you last changed your spark plugs? Or your fuel filter?

As soon as Old Chuckles there across the table has a better hand than you, you're out of the game. Even though the card that sank you might have been the littlest card in the deck.

Of course, the example I used is a pretty elementary one. And, in many cases, it doesn't take a unique perspective to figure out what the right choice is: if your engine is misfiring and you're fifty miles from homebase, you probably wouldn't decide it was a good time to do some contour flying over a hundred-acre forest. But often the decisions facing a pilot before he takes off and during the flight contain a degree of subtlety.

The point is, try not to turn your back on any safety consideration, even a seemingly insignificant one, as a matter of doctrine. In any given flight situation, try to maintain a running count of how many cards you've already given away.

### PROGRAM CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

by Paul McClung

As you can see from the schedule contained in the NEWSLETTER, the season's program is underway. Since it is a flying club program, you can see that most of the activities are flying-oriented. There are, however, many of our members who are not flying. I want to invite as many of those who can to involve themselves in some of the "ground support" roles which will be essential to the success of our fly-ins and cross-country events. One of the important aspects of a club like ours is the social enjoyment of other members, and if you don't have a plane to lean on to give you an excuse to get out to activities, it's important to get involved in other ways. If you have a hankering, give me a call at home (703)860-2919 and I guarantee to



(PROGRAM CHAIRMAN, cont.)  
involve you.

I also want to report to you that I attended a board meeting of EAA Chapter 186 with the intent of expressing our feeling of unity with them and to explore what activities we might share. I am pleased to report that I was most cordially received and that our good relationship with them will continue. A look at the schedule will reveal that the EAA 186 Fly-in at Winchester in early May is to be part of our schedule and that our Whitman Strip Fly-in in June is to be part of theirs. This cross-pollination of aviation interest will do both clubs a world of good. As each event draws closer, more detail will appear in ensuing issues of the NEWSLETTER.

I would like to report to the membership that, in addition to my formal role of Program Chairman of the Club, I have somehow, by osmosis or whatever, become the keeper of the list of those who want hangar space at Whitman Strip. I think this has come to pass because of my good relationship with Ed Whitman, a vacuum in getting some decisions made about getting some hangar work going and being harassed by certain nameless club members to "do something". In any event, I find myself acting in the capacity of "Hangar Czar" and wanted to report on that activity.

First, I'd like to lay out the considerations involved in selecting candidates for hangar occupancy. I wish it were as simple as "first come-first served", but it's not. Here are the attributes which carry the most weight in selecting candidates:

1) People able to provide significant assistance in hangar construction.

2) People who are members of USUA Flying Club #1.

3) People who fly (as opposed to just store) their planes.

4) People who are USUF-registered ultralight pilots.

5) People who have liability insurance for their flight activities.

6) All else being equal, first come-first served.

Some of these criteria may seem arguable; others are not. The virtue of having liability insurance, for instance, is of importance to the field proprietor and has nothing to do with who I think might make a good field tenant. I will be happy to discuss any of the "arguable" ones with anyone who might disagree.

In any event, Ed Whitman has given the go-ahead for hangar space for three more aircraft and, applying the above criteria, I have selected the following three people from the list: Roger Williams, Jim Birnbaum and Scott Chapman. As "Hangar Czar", I also get to do the scut-work of organizing hangar-building parties, so those three guys (as well as other folks who have volunteered for slave labor) can expect to hear from me within the next two weeks. Drop everything, grab your hammers and come a-runnin'.

#### PRODUCT REPORT

by Rob Brooke

I suffered for three years the ignominy of "MX Taxi Syndrome". You've seen it. Headline: "MX pilot, unable to turn left away from the wind, taxis all the way to Miami!". Footnote: "MX pilot, unable to turn from the taxiway to the runway, suffers hernia trying to use plane as wheelbarrow!". Well, it's the truth. With that fixed nose wheel, the MX-style ultralight sometimes just won't go where you want it to on the ground.

Enough already! I decided I'd had it and paid the tariff for a Sky Sports Steerable Nosewheel. Hence this product report. The rig

(PRODUCT REPORT, cont.)

consists of a steel plate with a kind of bicycle goose-neck through which a fork which holds the nose wheel pivots. A bell-crank is afixed to the top of the fork-tube which is operated by a push-rod fastened to the right rudder pedal (mine is the MXL version - the MX version operates by cable from the spoiler pedals).

Well, there's good news and bad news with the Sky Sports Steerable Nosewheel. First, the bad news. My first intimation of the bad news was the legend, "Made in Brazil" on the carton. "Uh-oh", I thought. Sure enough, the quality control is ATROCIOUS. The following is a list of my installation woes:

1.) A cross-tube of aluminum, used to provide bracing for the goose-neck tube, came pre-drilled with almost 1/8" error in hole alignment. The holes needed to line up with two holes in the goose-neck's steel plate. Using the plate as a jig would have guaranteed proper alignment. Instead, I spent twenty minutes with a rat-tail file moving the holes.

2.) One of the collars used to lock the axle in place was mis-drilled by 1/16". There was no way to get the 3/16" bolt through the axle to hold the collar. Another annoying process of drilling out the collar to correct the problem. Another twenty minutes shot.

3.) The aluminum tube spacers intended to keep the nose wheel centered in the fork are too short by 3/16". I'll have to make new spacers or I'll have a wheel bearing fall out. I have a stock Eipper aircraft with a stock Eipper nose wheel. It should have been done right.

4.) The fork-tube is pre-drilled for a 3/16" bolt to hold the bell-crank on but the bell-crank is not pre-drilled, the presumption being that the bell-crank must be positioned for proper wheel excursion. Once the bell-crank is

positioned, not only is it impossible to drill through the bell-crank at the exact location of the pre-drilled fork tube holes, the pre-drilled holes are positioned too low. It would have been better if both parts had been left undrilled.

5.) Here's a real biggy. In the MX/MXL, two pairs of tubes must join at the nose wheel, the nose wheel struts connecting to tension struts going back to the main axle. The Steerable Nosewheel kit provided no parts and no instructions as to how this connection should be made with the kit installed. As it turns out, I am a parts-pack-rat and was able to contrive a connection similar to Eipper's original only because I happened to have a couple of eye-bolts long enough to do the job. Pure luck or I'd be grounded with my whole nose wheel assembly hanging limply on the front of my airplane, sort of like a wet noodle.

O.K., that's a lot of bad news. You have to be prepared to remanufacture the unit in order to fit it to your plane. I consider this inexcusable considering 1) the quality of Eipper manufacture - there's no reason why an after-market kit shouldn't fit properly when a stock Eipper airframe is so predictable and 2) the cost of the kit - \$195, not including shipping. That's a lot of bread for a couple of steel assemblies and a handful of A/N nuts and bolts. While I agree that a good idea is worth some money, when you consider the price mark-up over material cost, one should expect the damn thing to fit properly, at least on its own terms. No vagaries of Eipper manufacture could ever be responsible for any of the kit flaws I have described above.

So now for the good news. The unit is well-designed and strong. In fact, I think it is probably stronger than the original Eipper nose wheel architecture. Furthermore, it does the job. I had the opportunity to test-taxi the plane

(PRODUCT REPORT, cont.)

in pretty strong cross-winds and I will unhesitatingly attest to the fact that it goes where I want it to go. U-turns describe a fairly wide radius but turn it did and, within its radius limit, crisply and predictably. It has cured my "MX Taxi Syndrome". I like it. I can go where I want at truly sedate speeds. There have been times (now past) when I had to do a kind of crazy standing-start ground loop in order to get my plane to turn, pouring all kinds of take-off-power propwash on the rudder. No more! I can now turn at trundle speed. Great!

Worth \$200? Well, I wanted the capability enough to spend the money but I would feel a whole lot better about the assembly difficulties I experienced if it had cost me \$100. Like I said, there's no excuse. Although I am a competent and well-equipped workman with a whole slug of extra bolts and ideas, it took me four hours to mount the S.O.B. If you buy one, it'll do what you want, but look forward to difficulty putting it on. Worth it? (Grudgingly) Yeah.

## FLIGHT PLAN

Apr 2 - Club Meeting

Apr 25 - USUA #1 Cross-Country flight to Orange County Airport

Apr 26 - EAA 186 Lunch Flight, Tappahannock Airport

\* \* \* GENERAL INFORMATION \* \* \*

The United States Ultralight Association's Flying Club #1 is a non-profit, educational club dedicated to the sport of recreational ultralight flying.

Meetings are held at 7:30 P.M. on the first Thursday of each month in the auditorium of the Springfield Operations Center of the Washington Gas Light Company, unless stated otherwise in the newsletter. To reach the WGL Center, take the Edsall Road West exit from I-395; turn left at the second light (Industrial Road); continue until the "Y" in the road; bear right and continue until you reach the WGL Center at 6801 Industrial Road on the left.

1987 CHAPTER OFFICERS

PRESIDENT	Steve Osten	703/860-2919
VICE PRESIDENT	Jim Kelly	301/855-4046
SECRETARY	Rob Brooke	301/279-2816
TREASURER	Dave Maitland	703/792-2924
PROGRAM CHAIRMAN	Paul McClung	703/430-0216
SAFETY OFFICER	Tom Simmons	703/548-7420
NEWSLETTER EDITOR	Rob Brooke	301/279-2816

\* \* \* \* \*

\*\*\* Members are encouraged to submit items for inclusion in this newsletter. Articles and non-commercial classified ads will be run, space available, free of charge for current members. Commercial ad rates are: full page - \$20.00; 1/2 page - \$10.00; 1/4 page - \$5.50; business card - \$3.00.

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION      Mail to: Rob Brooke      USUA Flying Club 1  
Dues: \$15.00      1809 McAuliffe Drive, Rockville, Md 20851

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DUES INCLUDED: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE H: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_      W: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_

UL'S OWNED: \_\_\_\_\_ USUF#: \_\_\_\_\_

USUA#: \_\_\_\_\_ EXAMINER? \_\_\_\_ 2-PL? \_\_\_\_ EAA#: \_\_\_\_\_ AOPA#: \_\_\_\_\_

FAA RATING: \_\_\_\_\_ DEALER: \_\_\_\_\_

INTERESTS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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# THE NEWSLETTER

USU A  
FLYING CLUB  
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