

U S U A FLYING CLUB 1 NEWSLETTER

August 1987

FROM THE LEFT SEAT

by Steve Osten

When I had to think about what I might say in this month's NEWSLETTER, the most trite piece of advice in all of flying kept jumping into my head. Don't fly in thunderstorms! I don't really have much to say about why that's not a good thing to do. The reason the thought kept jumping into my head was that I almost did (fly in thunderstorms). Not good. This was the day the mini-tornado tore up Manassas Airport. I was, as usual, flying at Whitman Strip. There were some scattered cells around but people were flying locally without problem. Things finally got to looking ominous enough that I thought I'd better high-tail it back to Warrenton-Fauquier Airport where I keep my Phantom. I didn't make it. Things looked great for a while, but then a cell piled down on me from the north. I was at the edge of it when it neared and I decided to get on the ground fast, which I did in some farmer's field. I spent some worrisome time hanging on to my wings as the thing passed by (I was still on its edge, thank goodness). After it passed, there was a lull which allowed me, with the help of the farmer, to push the plane to a hilltop with mown grass whence I got airborne again. With only a couple of miles to go, I was soon safely down again at Warrenton-Fauquier. A number of spectators' expressions showed a certain bemusement at the appearance of an ultralight out of the black and forbidding sky. I got the plane in the hangar and wiped down with a distinct sense of relief.

Don't fly in thunderstorms!

Fly Safely!

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ADVISORIES

The latest edition of EAA's Experimenter (nee Light Plane World) calls attention to the FAA's Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) on the establishment of "super TCA's", notably for us, at Washington National Airport and Andrews AFB. There's a whole slug of requirements about how to fly into and out of these things, but the one that would hit us the hardest is the demand for Mode-C transponders in all planes inside the thirty mile radius, even if the plane is below the floor of the TCA. That chews one Hell of a lot of real estate out of the flying map. Forget flying to Deep Creek or across the Bay or anywhere east or north of Whitman Strip. The

deadline for comment on this NPRM is August 17th, coming up. Please, please, write your objections to this aspect of the proposal to:

Federal Aviation Administration
Office of the Chief Counsel
Attention: Rules Docket (AGC-204)
Docket No. 25304
800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20591

(It looks like they're trying to keep responses down by making the address too big for the envelope!)

Your attention is called to the FLIGHT PLAN and the Orange County Airport cross-country flight scheduled for August 16th. This was tentatively scheduled as a fly-in early in the season but since we've

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just had a successful fly-in and the original Orange County Cross-country was blown out, it was decided to reschedule the cross-country. Orange County Airport is a wonderful destination for an ultralight cross-country from Whitman Strip. The airport welcomes ultralights, has a funky little restaurant attached and is only 35 or so scenic easy-to-navigate miles south of Whitman Strip. The plan is: take-off time of 10:00 am, lunch at Orange County Airport, side trip flight to Lake Anna (by vote of the flight attendees) and return to Whitman Strip. Fuel is available at Orange County Airport.

Red Morris, the President of EAA 186, had this to say in the August Edition of EAA 186's newsletter:

"The chapter picnic at Whitman field was an outstanding success. This was grass roots flying at its best. There were about a dozen ultralights present along with three Cessna 140's, one Cessna 170, a Pitts Special who did a nice routine overhead and a couple of other Cessnas and Pipers. This is the type of flying event that may help get our younger people interested in flying again. It was really nice to enjoy this type of event without worrying about the public or making money.

"I wish to extend my thanks to USUA #1 for inviting us and showing us what great fun can be had from grass roots flying."

EDITORIAL

by Rob Brooke

I got my first "letter to the editor" the other day. It was kind of gratifying, sort of ratified my exalted opinion of myself as Editor of your NEWSLETTER. Then I read it. I here print it, with apologies to the author for minor spelling corrections:

"CONTOUR FLYING AND HANGAR HOPPING

Contour flying over the Whitman property is very much done. Mr. Whitman doesn't mind it over the Whitman property. But, he doesn't permit flying 10 feet over the hangars or doing things like landing on the runway in front of the hangars and taking off again 10 feet over people's heads and the wing being 1 foot from the fence. Please help enforce this very simple rule. Thanks.

Respectfully,

Eddy Whitman "

Well, there's the letter. From the youngest member of our club. As he handed it to me the last time I was at the field, he said that it had been read and approved by his father, Ed Whitman, proprietor of the field which gives this club its focus.

There is not a whole lot I can add to the strength of this letter. We who fly at Whitman Strip have been flying like fools. I know this, because I have been guilty along with everyone else. I don't wish to point any fingers, select any scapegoat. I only want to make a few cautionary remarks (I'm the Editor, I get to do that).

As a group of Club pilots, it's time we gave up our adolescence and flew responsibly. Fly the pattern when you take off or land. No more buzzing hangars, people, cows, cars, whatever. Having read Eddy's letter, knowing that we are certainly alienating not only our neighbors but Ed Whitman himself, if I were making rules, I would say, "Don't fly under 500' AGL unless you're taking off or landing!" If you have a consuming desire to show off, find an audience way the Hell away from Whitman Strip, or do your wingovers at 1000' or higher.

The letter invites us to continue contour flying at Whitman Strip but I have deep reservations about the safety and intelligence of that activity (and I have done it

(EDITORIAL, cont.)

often). I accept that we perform this sport for its beauty and excitement and that contour flying is one of its most exciting aspects. But two other things are certainly true: while contour flying, I am exposed to many moments when an engine failure would plunge me into the proverbial "Deep Yogurt". I go to great lengths to fly at safe altitudes and pick possible emergency landing sites whenever I'm flying cross-country. And then I go contour flying? Wow! Makes no sense, does it?

And the second thing, what about that? Well, that's politics. Contour flying is just not neighborly behavior. Paul McClung and I were doing a little contour flying a while back and we kind of slipped off the Whitman property to the East a little bit and that fellow that I thought was waving at us, well, Paul was pretty sure that he was shaking his fist! We got away from there fast. I don't think I will ever contour fly at or near Whitman Strip again. I don't believe anyone should. There are too many of us now. Even those of us who love airplane noise would be annoyed by it if we were under it non-stop on a sleep-in Sunday morning.

So let us, as a Club, move toward responsible flying, do what we can to protect the image of our sport and of Whitman Strip. An audience is hard to resist but, grit your teeth, be brave, take your shenanigans away from Whitman Strip, either laterally or vertically. I call upon every pilot who uses Whitman Strip to promote, by his own responsible flying and by his refusal to accept foolish flying in others, the continued welfare of Whitman Strip and the continuation of our good relationship with Ed Whitman.

Thank you, Eddy!

KUDOS

by Tom Simmons

Well, USUA #1's June Fly-in has come and gone and, as Safety Officer, it is my pleasant duty to inform the membership that no one was killed. From all appearances, no one even came close. In fact, after listening to all the pilots' stories told around the bonfire Saturday night, I suspect that the only casualty of the whole weekend was Truth.

Credit for the success of the Fly-in goes to all who attended. Good procedures were more or less the rule, as were courtesy, reasonable cleanliness, a weather eye and good comradeship.

But special credit should be given to Paul McClung, our Program Chairman, whose contributing efforts before, during and after the fact are a significant benefit to all members, even though those contributions may sometimes go unseen. Paul made sure that there were refreshments (often out of his own pocket), made sure that Mr. Whitman was comfortable with the way his property was being used and just generally made sure that there was some sense of continuity and management during the entire event.

It is a big job and an important one. I know that I have tended to take Paul for granted in the past and I look forward to taking him for granted in the future, too. But an occasional nod of recognition from the membership, acknowledging his many efforts on our behalf, would be appropriate and well-deserved.

Another nice aspect of the June Fly-in - and, indeed, it seems to be a standing policy of USUA #1 members - was how often pilots were invited to test-fly other members' airplanes. This is good, not only for the additional expertise that it gives to the pilots but also for cementing the bonds of friendship within the Club. However, it prompts me to make a suggestion, at

(KUDOS, cont.)

least, about some possible procedures.

Do you pre-flight a friend's airplane? Probably not. I know that I didn't when I flew the McClungs' MX. And the most likely excuse is that you don't know what to look for on a strange airplane. Yet, it could be the most important pre-flight of your flying career. Because, no matter how many hours you've logged on your own airplane, you're a beginner when you're flying a new bird. Your ability to handle an emergency of any magnitude, no matter how small, is substantially different than it would be in your familiar airframe: all of your hard-won proficiency and sensitivity to the controls is useless on new controls.

So think about pre-flying a friend's airplane before you fly it. Better yet, ask the owner to pre-flight it with you. And when you're up in the air, don't act like Chuck Yeager trying to stretch the envelope.

I'll say again that I think flying other airplanes is good for our Club, our sport and our friendships. But having an accident, however minor, in a friend's airplane would be bad for all three.

AIRWORTHINESS ALERT

by Rob Brooke

Phantom pilots, check your planes! Your engine may be loose. Among the various other equipment failures observed at the June 27/28 Whitman Fly-in were two identical failures in Phantom ultralights owned and flown by Club pilots.

Steve Osten was the first to discover the problem. The first symptom was belt slippage in the reduction drive. Steve replaced the belts and, in the process of tightening them, discovered major cracks in the aluminum angle motor mounts. Both left and right forward engine bolt holes had cracks

extending from the hole to the edge of the motor mount. This wasn't great news, as Steve was planning a nice flying day and was now grounded. The news was better, however, than having made the discovery at altitude a long way from home.

Since I am a naturally nosy person, having seen the total destruction of Steve Osten's motor mounts, I quietly sauntered over to Charlie Maples' Phantom and had a look at the motor mounts. Well, whadda ya know, his were busted, too, in exactly the same way, in exactly the same places: big cracks in the motor mounts going in from the edges to the forward bolt holes. Charlie, looking crestfallen, said, "I had a feeling but I was afraid to look!"

After carefully inspecting the way the Phantom motor mount is designed, I have concluded that the design is flawed. The mounts are made of aluminum and are cantilevered in such a way that the strength of the aluminum alone must support the belt tension of the reduction drive. Furthermore, this tensioning force, through which all the power of the engine is transmitted, is concentrated at the forward engine-mounting bolt holes. The aluminum is thick and looks adequate to its job of supporting the vibrating mass of the engine but it is demonstrably inadequate to the job of supporting the reduction drive.

Lesson: First, keep a close eye on your motor mounts. Check for cracks routinely as part of your pre-flight. Second, consider replacing the aluminum angles with sterner stuff. I am neither an aircraft designer nor a metallurgist, so I will not recommend an alternative but, if I were having the problem (or owned a belt re-drive Phantom), I would be on the phone to the Phantom folks, asking for advice.

There are two note benes to this story: First, Phantoms with reduction drives which do not use

(AIRWORTHINESS ALERT, cont.) belts (Rotax gear drive, etc.) are probably immune to the disease. The second is, Charlie Maples has engineered a truly brawny single-piece motor mount of heavy aluminum channel. I can attest to the quality of its manufacture. It certainly looks more effective than the two slender aluminum angles it replaces. Charlie is interested in marketing the thing. If anyone is interested, write:

Charles Maples
4656 Conwell Drive
Annandale, VA 22003
(703)941-8167

WHITMAN STRIP FLY-IN

On June 27/28, USUA Club #1 hosted a two-day campout/fly-in at Whitman Strip. The event was blessed with good weather on both days and was well attended, both on the ground and in the air. Event chairman Paul McClung was well-prepared with grills, hot-dogs, soft-drinks and a Porta-John.

Saturday, the 27th, was pretty much devoted to ultralight activities around the field, with MX's, MXL's, Spitfires, Phantoms, a Weedhopper and a trike disporting themselves. There was a bit of breeze but not enough to ground anybody and it was unseasonably cool and pleasant. By early afternoon, a pretty good crowd had arrived, either to fly or socialize (or both), and the field stayed lively 'til long into the night. After dark, Ed Whitman showed up with a load of logs and a bonfire was cranked up to stimulate war-stories and marshmallow roasting. The renowned Italian fireworks firm of Gildea, Osten and (Eddy) Whitman provided aerial displays and the conversation got sillier and sillier. By midnight, those camping at the field had retired and the fire went to embers.

Sunday, the 28th, Whitman Strip was also a luncheon flight destination for EAA 186. With a number of fly-

in guests as well as a big group of drive-in's, EAA 186 provided a great turn-out. "Wienie King" Paul McClung provided eats for the guests and Whitman Strip looked more festive than ever.

In addition to being a fly-in, drive-in and campout, the event also turned into a "break-in", with various ultralights suffering assorted minor and not-so-minor (see Airworthiness Alert, this issue) breakdowns. Ignition problems, instrument pod support breakage, broken engine mounts, a VW Bus side door which fell off, worn prop-drive bearings, you name it, something was going wrong somewhere. However, even in adversity, there was some good to be gained. There was no shortage of tools or volunteers in licking a problem. Even the VW Bus door got back on track.

The event was a great success and will be the measure of the success of the Club's fly-ins for some time to come, as everyone who was there will certainly agree. If you didn't make it, see you next time, you missed a great weekend.

GARBER FACILITY TOUR

On Saturday, July 11th, the majority of USUA Club #1 missed a great opportunity to tour the Garber Facility, the restoration lab of the National Air and Space Museum. The only club members in attendance were Rob Brooke, George McClung and Paul McClung. Those of you who have never taken this tour, you are missing a Lulu!

Far from being a dry-as-dust look into a restoration lab, this is an indescribable stroll through America's flying history. If you have been to the Air and Space Museum and felt wow'ed by what's on display there, well, you ain't seen nothin', Buster. Out of a collection of many hundreds of historically important aircraft, only a small fraction - seventy-five or so - are on display on the Mall. The rest are, you guessed it, at the

(GARBER TOUR, cont.)

Garber Facility at Silver Hill, MD.

FLIGHT PLAN

Aug 6 - Club Meeting.

Aug 16 - Club Cross-country to Orange County Airport. Take off from Whitman Strip, 10:00 am.

CLASSIFIED

FOR SALE - '84 Quicksilver MX, fairing, brakes, CHT, ASI, altimeter, compass, tach, wheel pants, always hangared, 170 hrs TT. \$3500 or \$4000 with ballistic chute. Uncovered trailer available. Call George, Paul or Steve McClung, 703/620-3318

Not all of these aircraft are restored. Some are in pieces, some are grievously incomplete (a Japanese WWII "Betty" bomber consists only of the forward half of the fuselage - but it's the last "Betty" in the world!) but many are already restored or not in need of restoration. The planes on view are deliciously disorganized - no theme galleries here. A monster WWII P-47 Thunderbolt fighter may be rubbing wingtips with a rag-and-stick confection from 1912. One never has to wait to "get to the next gallery" to see something he's really interested in, just look a plane or two down the line.

World War II your bag? How about: the last remaining B17-D, a Hawker Hurricane, Fieseler Storch, the "Enola Gay", A pristine Focke-Wulf 190, an Arado twin-jet bomber (under restoration), P-38, P-47, AT-6, Stearman, Airacobra, TBF Avenger and on and on and on.

Or the Classic Era of aviation between the World Wars, how about: Roscoe Turner's racer, assorted Waco's, a 1922 Bellanca (Lindberg tried to get a Bellanca and failed before he turned, in desperation, to Ryan), a JN-4 "Jenny", of barnstorming fame, a Standard and all sorts of weird and wacky experimental efforts, created in an aviation-happy America.

And on and on and on. For three and a half concentrated hours, the tour wound through five buildings of the Silver Hill complex with a surprise or a wonder around every corner. For anyone interested in aviation (and who of us isn't), this was "kid-in-a-candy-store" time. The Club will doubtless arrange another tour at Silver Hill next year. Don't miss it!

* * * 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.

* * * * *

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: _____

Robert B. Chapman
Rt. 1, Box 51A (Lenah Road)
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THE NEWSLETTER

USU A
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#1

