

U S U A FLYING CLUB 1 NEWSLETTER

August 1988

FROM THE LEFT SEAT

by Paul McCLung

I hesitate to start this newsletter on a down note, but there have been a couple of things disturbing me recently. The first thing is "flight instruction" at Whitman Strip. During the past month, I have gotten several phone calls about people descending on Whitman Strip to do "amateur" flying instruction in single-place ultralights (that's redundant; all ultralights are single-place). One fellow in particular, not a member of the club, not based at Whitman Strip, has on several occasions shown up at Whitman Strip and has been attempting to teach a friend to fly his Quicksilver MX. The end result of this "course of instruction" was that the friend taxied the MX into the fence at a pretty good clip and made aluminum spaghetti of the MX. That's the good news. The bad news is that the friend might have gotten himself airborne and become Whitman Strip's first (and likely its last) fatality.

My own personally-held opinion is that Whitman Strip cannot support so casual an approach to responsible aviation. My own conviction is that the only reasonable way to learn to fly is in a two-place aircraft. Admittedly, it's tough getting training in two-place "ultralight-type" aircraft. You've got to get yourself up to Windstar or meet Jim Kelly's schedule. But there's nothing keeping you from soloing a Cessna 152 or whatever else is out there that flies in training programs. Once you're a pilot, getting into ultralights is a relatively easy matter.

The next beef I have is seeing Whitman Strip turning into a "storage bin". And I'm not talking about junk storage, I'm talking about aircraft. The last time I was up at Windstar, I had scornful things to say about all the never-used, tied-down-outside ultralights moldering away in the sun and weather. Then it suddenly hit me that Whitman Strip is just as bad. The only difference is that our tied-down, never-used ultralights are better protected from the weather. They are just as useless as the wrecks at Windstar. It seems a shame to me that planes that haven't been flown all year (and probably won't be) are taking hangar space which could be offered to people who are dying to get into the sport, but hold back because they can't find a place to store a plane. A plane that isn't going to be used could as well be broken down and stored in a garage, and a lot cheaper, too. My hunch is that folks, once they have a hangar spot, are loathe to give it up, whether they're flying or not. That's probably a good, protective personal policy, but it sure doesn't boost flying activity in the club.

The last thing bugging me is the low grade of aircraft maintenance we seem to be "enjoying" this year. A lot of activities get planned, but there are so many grounded airplanes that there's no one who can take advantage. Come on, guys, get 'em fixed and get 'em flying! We have a couple of great cross-country flights coming up this month. I'd really enjoy it if we could mount well-attended flights. The T.I. Martin flight should be the preparation for the Luray Caverns flight. As an inducement, I am offering a Blue Ribbon to the pilot who conveys the most unique lunch to Luray Caverns (my call). If that isn't a challenge, I don't know what is. Seriously, the life and vitality of the club are directly

related to the amount of flying we do. The more people flying, the stronger and more energetic the whole club program seems to get.

To close, I offer an up-beat announcement. I have a USUA video for the August meeting which was made by a Denver-based ultralight club. It is truly enjoyable and will delight you all. I look forward to seeing as many of you as can make it at the meeting.

Fly Safely!

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ADVISORIES

Please welcome new member Larry Crawford. Larry is from Vienna, VA and has a CGS Hawk 2-place he's finishing up. Some of us had an opportunity to meet Larry at the July meeting and get a report on his CGS Hawk building experiences.

Your attention is called to the EAA 186 Luncheon Flight to Tappahannock Airport on the 28th of August. In fact, your attention is called to the entire August activity schedule, which is especially rich. The EAA 186 Luncheon Flights occur each month of the year, with a different area airport the destination each month. Airports are chosen which have restaurant facilities nearby, and those who make the flights gather for lunch at twelve o'clock. These events have varying attendance but a few folks always show up. Sometimes a crowd shows up when the weather is nice and the destination attractive.

Tappahannock is a longish flight but should be scenic and navigationally easy, since the route is along the Rappahannock River beyond Fredericksburg. Refueling opportunities exist at Fredericksburg and Tappahannock. The EAA 186 guys are always delighted to play host to USUA #1 pilots who make the flights, and our ultralights and their ability to "really fly somewhere" become significant topics of lunchtime conversation. If you're up to sixty-mile flights and the weather's good, try it, you'll like it.

MEA CULPA

by Rob Brooke

Mea maxima culpa! No July NEWSLETTER and it's entirely my fault. Time kept slipping by, I kept working on my Firestar instead of editing, cutting, pasting, folding, stapling and mailing. Some of you have advertisements you wanted run so you could sell your airplanes (so you could run out and buy Firestars, I bet) and some of you just hang forlornly around the mailbox all month, waiting for that treasured newsletter.

Well, that's a lame joke, but I am sincerely sorry, and I apologize to all of you, whether disappointed or not. Those of you who didn't notice, I apologize to you, too.

In any event, when (if) you read the NEW PLANE article this month, you will see where my time went. I must confess that I am only mildly sorry I failed you. Without an airplane to keep me flying a lot, to keep me more a part of the scene at Whitman Strip and taking more part in the Club's flying activities, it has become more and more difficult to crank up the enthusiasm to get out the NEWSLETTER each month. I am not witness to enough that is going on, and only Paul McClung burns up my phone line to tell me, and even then, writing it down is sort of stale and second-hand.

Well, enough of "confession is good for the soul". You will see how nearly the plane is getting to completion. I can't promise you that I won't fail you again, but I promise to have a different excuse!

HAPPY AUGUST

If the weather will stop acting like a spiky-haired adolescent, there will be much of interest going on in August. The Club is sponsoring three events this month which should provide something for everyone.

The first event is the becoming-traditional Garber Facility tour. Most of you know what this tour's all about. For those of you who don't, the Garber Facility is the storage and restoration facility of the National Air and Space Museum. An easy way to indicate the level of potential interest this facility represents is simply to say that, for every plane that can be displayed at the museum on the Mall, there are eight or ten at the Garber Facility of equal interest. Many of them are in display-worthy condition and can be seen on the tour. Whatever your aeronautical interest, you will be able to wallow in it on this tour. That doesn't include ultralights, but we wallow in those on our own (no, that wasn't a slur on your flying ability).

The other two events are cross-country flights, one to T.I. Martin Airport, the other to Luray Caverns Airport. Each is a good cross-country experience, though they differ widely in challenge.

The T.I. Martin flight is short and without navigational complexity. It is hoped that pilots who are still "cutting their cross-country teeth" will make this flight to increase their repertoire and get some off-field experience. It's only 26 miles, one-way but still a goodly piece away from Whitman Strip. It is a proper airport, with a paved runway, a nice lounge and vending machines, a cordial and welcoming FBO - in other words, a good place to go, to practise your pattern work, to land on asphalt, to feel at home and to stretch your cross-country muscles.

The Luray Caverns flight is

significantly more challenging, but for anyone who has flown a forty- or fifty-mile cross-country, it should not be daunting. It has major cross-country attractions. It is a long flight and takes one away from easy navigational aids like pipelines and power lines. The route crosses the Blue Ridge through a higher pass than experienced on the Winchester flight, so you wind up "getting right up there", always an exciting thing, even for the experienced.

The airport doesn't have a whole lot in the way of facilities, but there are a few vending machines, fuel, a hospitable FBO, a scenic location next to a bend of the Shenandoah River and, should the glittering life of Luray beckon, a courtesy bus operated by Luray Caverns that can get you away from the airport. The plan is to carry "brown-bag" lunches on the flight, to be consumed at the airport. Cokes, etc. are available there to wash it all down with. Then, after refuelling, the flight back is as scenic and interesting as getting there. The Blue Ridge is pretty rugged in the Luray area, so if you can sling a camera around your neck for the flight, you'll get some dramatic pictures.

IF I HAD THE WINGS OF AN ANGEL

The club secretary received an unusual and touching letter. A certain Dwain Collings, now suffering in duration vile (for possession of certain "controlled" substances) is an erstwhile ultralight pilot. His letter states that he still has "two years to go" but would sure like to catch up on the ultralight scene. He has been out of the sport since 1983, so he has a lot of catching-up to do. He asks that any of you who have collections of old issues of ULTRALIGHT FLYING! or the EXPERIMENTER (ne Light Plane World) which you don't mind getting rid of to mail them to him. His address is as follows:

(ANGEL WINGS, cont.)

Dwain Collings
3150 Horton Rd., Box 180
Fort Worth, TX 76119

Sounds like a good use to which to put your cast-off ultralight rags. As Dwain says, he will be very grateful!

ULTRALIGHT ORPHANS

Editorial

In my guise as Club Secretary, I received a letter from USUA which puts a whole new light on the USUA's petition to the FAA for regulation change. The letter states that the USUF programs for pilot and airplane registration will be phasing down unless increased participation causes a re-evaluation of the decision (my underlines).

Enclosed with the letter to USUA clubs was a copy of a letter from John Ballantyne to Allan McArtor, the current FAA Administrator. That letter said the same thing, namely, that owing to financial difficulties arising from poor participation by the ultralight community, the USUF programs could not be maintained.

Well, what does that mean to us? What the heck, USUF pilot and vehicle registration has never been a high-priority item among ultralight pilots, what's to worry? Now I don't even have to consider the hassle of getting numbers on my left wing!

The answer to those rhetorical questions is that FAR 103 was invented and accepted by the FAA, liberal rule that it is, with the express expectation that the community would find acceptable ways of regulating itself. Sort of a Quid Pro Quo, if you will. The FAA says, "You guys are going to get some time to learn to run your own act; we're going to kind of look over your shoulder and approve what you're doing, and while you're doing it, we'll let you fly under

FAR 103, which ought to let most everybody do pretty much what he wants."

If you will be honest with yourself, you will admit that the FAA kept its part of the bargain. We have been free to fly very much as we wished, even when we have stretched the parameters of the already permissive regulation. But what John Ballantyne is confessing in his letter to the Administrator is that we have not and are not keeping our part. He says that the participation is pitifully small, that the fees do not support the administrative effort, and that, as a regulatory effort, it was doomed from the start, since no benefits accrue to him who observes the rules.

John is right. Why should I pay money and take tests when the result of it all is no increase in my flying privileges or my stature in the flying community. Waving my USUA pilot's registration at a GA airport in front of pilots, many of whom, if the truth be told, don't fly as well as I do, is good for a good horse-laugh. Why bother? Aircraft registration? Where do I get stick-on numbers? What are they good for? Oh, but doing both will convince AVEMCO that I can be allowed to pay \$200 for liability insurance. Who needs it? I don't know how I'm going to do \$100,000 worth of damage without killing myself, anyway. In fact, the only thing I get out of doing all this stuff is a certain intangible sense of being a good citizen and Boy Scout (no Merit Badge). Good enough for me, I have the papers to prove it, but not good enough for your average bloke and not good enough for the ultralight community.

So what John Ballantyne is trumpeting to the FAA is this:

1. Our voluntary programs do not work, and will not work without some teeth in them. The USUA-petitioned changes to FAR 103 will not only widen the parameters of the sport (good for us by most

(ULTRALIGHT ORPHANS, cont.)

reckonings), but will require participation in our self-governed regulation programs for continued legal flying privileges (O.K. for most of us, but anathema to some).

2. Failure to enact the substance of the USUA-petitioned change by the FAA will result in no self-regulation at all. The FAA can either let FAR 103 stand as is, or fashion a new regulation according to its wishes. Unless, of course, by some miracle, all unregistered ultralight pilots suffer some epiphany, behold Our Lady of the Winds aloft in a Weedhopper, and all rush off to Mt. Airy to be shriven and tested and registered. Fat Chance.

What do I hope for? That the FAA will listen seriously to John Ballantyne, accept the wisdom of his suggestions and, with or without a huge write-in campaign of support (it'll be without), enact most or all of what is contained in USUA's petition. We'll all then have to take our tests and register ourselves and our planes, and stick on our numbers. It will be a mild pain, but no big deal. I have said it before and I'll say it again, if you can't pass the USUF pilot registration tests, you have no business in the air, unless you're polishing to take the tests.

What do I expect? If the FAA remains the regulatory slug it has always been, no change will be made in the near future. No wave of new registrations will convince John Ballantyne that USUF is worth saving. He'll keep his promise, and all avenues for self-regulation will close by 1991, all registrations then on the books will expire by 1993. The FAA might, or might not decide at some point that ultralights are noisy, pesky dangerous things, and should be submitted to severe regulatory might. No argument pointing to an operative self-regulation program will be forthcoming. I won't guess what might happen. No scenario is heartening. Good luck, everyone!

NEW PLANE

by Rob Brooke

Well, where to start. By not having brought you up to date last month, I've got a whole slug of progress to report. When last seen, in the June NEWSLETTER, I was bemoaning my inactivity and wondering whether I'd ever get rolling again. I'm not just rolling, I'm a one-man avalanche. At the beginning of June, the tail-feathers were covered and doped, one aileron was covered and doped, and I had a fully constructed fuselage and pair of wings and other aileron, without covering, and with the fuselage needing priming.

The first order of business was to get the fuselage tube primed. I felt that should be done prior to doing any covering of the lower vertical stabilizer and cage since I didn't want to wind up spraying primer all over the cloth, nor have a complex masking problem. That done, I installed the seat, safety belts and swaged the rudder cables (to shackles to be bolted to the rudder aft, to tangs on the rudder pedals forward). This step entailed the temporary mounting of the upper vertical stabilizer/rudder and the fairing to get the cable lengths right and to check that the pedals had enough clearance inside the fairing. Those of you with long memories will remember that I had been concerned that the right pedal would hit the fairing and not allow enough right-rudder excursion. Not to worry! Even though the pedals are intentionally offset to the right by design (to give the cables clearance beside the joy-stick mixer, there is ample room for full rudder pedal excursion inside the fairing. My shoe will probably rub the right fairing wall occasionally, but I'll live with that.

The next step was to rivet on the side and top bows which are beside and above the pilot. To do this I temporarily fastened the steel bow which came with the full-windshield kit, reckoning that the position of the cabin bows was most dependent

(NEW PLANE, cont.)

on that assembly. That concluded, I was able to cover the lower vertical stabilizer and the entire cage. One trick Art Loeb (seen lately doing a LOT of taxiing at Whitman Strip in his new Firestar) suggested was to take a wheel off and lay the fuselage over on one side or the other, resting on one axle on the ground, the main wing spar fitting on a saw-horse and the tube supported on a pad on another saw-horse. This allows work with the cage in a horizontal position, useful for covering the bottom, or spreading dope on the sides without the danger of runs. At this point in the construction, the whole fuselage/tube assembly is still very lightweight and can be tilted over and back single-handed with ease.

I must tell you that getting the fuselage covered was a BIG event. The actual amount of work was not that significant, but it occasioned a huge psychological leap. The whole thinga-ma-jig stopped being an intricate pile of tubes and hinges and junk and became an airplane, at once, in the twinkling of an eye. There it sat, still needing work to get it flyable, but an AIRPLANE, by God! Well, motivation stopped being a problem. From that moment, I have been going hammer and tongs.

I had previously finished filling and priming the fairing, so as soon as the cage was covered and doped, I installed it permanently, I guess you could wait 'til the painting was done, but I intend to paint cage and fairing as a single unit. That way, I'll get the rivet heads and everything in one lick. There is a final story on the fairing. I spent a lot of time puttying holes and pits in the exterior, as well as making instrument cut-outs and glassing in venturi support (ASI) and tubing and wiring guides so my rudder-flailing feet do not gut my instrument panel in flight. Having finished all that, I shot a coat of primer on the fairing. Nothing like a coat of yellow primer to reveal

all the holes and pits you missed in your patching exercise. Hell, the thing looked like Chuck Yeager had been out with his 10 Gauge and mistaken it for a partridge. Leprosy! Back to the puttying and patching until I finally got sick of it, sanded it and re-primed it and said, "To Hell with it, that's the way it's going on!". A Rolls Royce finish it's not, but it'll do.

The other part of the fairing story is the reason for the lousy fit. The first Firestars came out with a fairing which fit very nicely and was easy to install, but everybody was complaining about how flimsy it was. Builders either complained and lived with it (dent it with your thumb, waved around a lot in flight) or reinforced it a lot. Word doubtless got back to the Kolb Company. In any event, my fairing came out of the box built like a Sherman tank. This seems to have been achieved by using the same female mold in which the flimsy fairing was laid up, but adding more layers of glass to make it more rigid. The result has been a fairing that is very rigid, thank you (need any doors battered down?), but whose thickness of fiberglass has shrunk its inside dimension so much that it no longer fits over the cage it was designed for. So you call it; would you rather go for an easy fit and have to beef it up to gain rigidity, or would you rather have it nice and strong, but have to break it all to Hell and patch it up again to get it to fit? Yuck!

After covering and then attaching the fairing, I installed the shorty windshield. When it was finished, I removed it, and then did all the installation work on the full-size windscreen except cutting and riveting the Lexan. I'll postpone that for a bad-weather day, since there is a lot of patterning and layout that I can do indoors.

Which left the lone remaining MAJOR job prior to painting, covering the wings and attaching the ailerons.

(NEW PLANE, cont.)

That is now almost complete. I surprised myself. On the two hottest weekends of July, those real record-breaking stinkers, there I was, outdoors both days of both weekends, covering and doping a wing and getting the aileron gap-sealed and attached. It took four and a half full days of work to do one wing. When it was finished, I attached it to the fuselage in the folded position and covered the newly extended plane with a larger tarp. At the time of this writing, the second wing is covered, top and bottom, and the upper surface is already riveted to the ribs (Kolb's version of rib-stitching). There remains the lower surface to be rib-riveted, the overlap of upper/lower fabric to be taped, some reinforcing patches to be added and the whole to be finally heat-shrunk and doped. Then the aileron must be fitted, the gap-seal applied and the hinges riveted. All of that constitutes two days' work.

After that, (awe-struck and sotto voce) the whole airplane is ready to paint. I can't predict exactly how long that process will take, but I plan to take a few days off from work to keep it flowing, trying to pick a time when the weather looks good. Maybe I can get the whole smash painted in a week (we're talking the first week and a half of August here).

With the painting done, there remains little more than bolt-on stuff to do: plop the engine on, wire up the instruments (the panel's already finished), add control levers and cables for throttle and choke. I mean, this is the kind of stuff you do for fun on a maintenance afternoon at the hangar.

What I'm trying to say here is, IF the painting goes well, IF the engine drops on like it should, and IF my gingerly step-by-step test flights prove it to be an airworthy machine, I MIGHT make the Luray Caverns flight. But don't bet the homestead on it.

FLIGHT PLAN

Aug 7 - Garber Facility Tour.

Aug 13 - Cross-country flight to T.I. Martin Airport, Culpeper, VA. Rain date Aug 14.

Aug 27 - Cross-country to Luray Caverns Airport. Rain date Aug 28.

Aug 28 - EAA 186 Luncheon Flight. Tappahannock, VA.

CLASSIFIED

FOR SALE: Repairable ultralight. Zenair Zipper 2-place. Includes Rockwell engine usable if converted to single-place. \$300. Robert Street, 3229 West Ox Road, Herndon, VA 22071. 860-3210.

FOR SALE: Eipper MXL. 4 hours on engine. Built by Tom Gunnarson at Windstar, Summer 1986. New propeller and fairing; set of new sails included. \$4150. Roger Williams, (301)946-5150.

FOR SALE: New Tierra II. Factory Built. 532 Rotax with electric start. Full enclosure, instruments, 12 gal. tank. Sam Loper, (301)791-1681, Hagerstown, MD.

FOR SALE: Kolb Twinstar. Rotax 503, with electric start and battery. Built 1985-6, FAA reg. 1986. TT 50 hrs. Disc brakes, ASI, altimeter, VSI, compass, CHT, tach, turn/slip indicator, Hobbes, strobe, Eipper-type seat shells and covers, custom-built trailer with wind fairing. Always hangared. \$7600. Jim Milner, 5305 Wye Creek Drive, Frederick, MD 21701.

FOR SALE: Eipper Quicksilver MX, Rotax 377, new custom sails, red with white panels, wheel pants, anti-vibe driveshaft, MXL-type horizontal stabilizer, CHT, tach, Hall ASI, hand-deployed chute, extra muffler. \$2750. Jim Milner, 5305 Wye Creek Drive, Frederick, MD 21701.

* * * 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.

1988 CHAPTER OFFICERS

PRESIDENT	Paul McClung	703/860-2919
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SECRETARY	Rob Brooke	301/279-2816
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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: _____

Robert B. Chapman
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THE NEWSLETTER

USUA
FLYING CLUB
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