

U S U A FLYING CLUB 1 NEWSLETTER

November 1988

FROM THE LEFT SEAT by Paul McCLung

There's a new and different craft based at Whitman Strip. I can guarantee that everyone who can get down there will be interested in it. It's a "New Moon Special" single seater, wooden home-built with a single-head motor powered by natural gas. There is some concern over its legality under FAR 103, since its tank will certainly (hopefully?) hold more than five gallons. It sports a complete enclosure, but buttoned up, the visibility is constricted.

I'm pretty sure most of you pilots out there have been checked out in this little honey at some time in your flying experience. You'll be able to manage both left- and right-hand patterns, but watch out for crosswinds! The last time I looked, the operation manual was right on the seat and there was even a roll of tissue to clean the windshield with. It has a "swing out" hatch which latches inside the cockpit, and you can run 'er up to full throttle (she'll backfire a little until she warms up), and she won't budge an inch.

So if you've been hanging around Whitman Strip and you're getting a little bored with the same old routine in your MX or whatever, when you get "antsy for action", try out the "New Moon Special". You'll love it!

With November in our laps, the club's flying activities are pretty-well dried up until spring. We've fallen off the bottom of our activity calendar for 1988 and we won't have anything worthy of the name until April. Some of you hardy souls will be flying off and on through the winter. Please remember words like "hypothermia" during the next few months, fly shorter hops and dress warmly. At the first sign of the cold-weather quivers, get back on the ground and head for the hot cocoa.

Fly Safely!

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ADVISORIES

Last month was a banner month for new member applications. Please welcome new members Herschell Blevins of Amissville, Va., Ted Cobb of Lorton, Va., Greg Kilpatrick of Rockville, Md., Mike Kilpatrick of Gaithersburg, Md., Kevin Nevin of Falls Church, Va. and Wayne Winslow of Manassas, Va.

Two of the application forms came in with Jim Birnbaum's mailing label on the back, so Jim qualifies for the "Beating the Bushes" Award for October. Welcome aboard,

everybody!

Thanks to Charlie Maples for the new windsock at Whitman Strip. He quickly accepted the Board of Directors challenge, got a brand new frame and sock from Wag Aero and got it installed the moment it arrived. At this writing, it is waving bravely in the breeze in the same location as its tattered predecessor. If you see Charlie, say "Thanks!".

At the October meeting, the slate of officers put forward by the nominating committee for 1989 was



dutifully elected. Taking charge of the club's destiny in January will be:

President	Rob Brooke
Vice President	Tom Simmons
Secretary	Paul McClung
Treasurer	Charlie Maples

Club office seems to rotate among those few members with enough (choose one) a) energy, b) willingness, c) spare time, or d) gullibility to volunteer for the job. Therefore, thanks to an energetic, willing and gullible layabout, Steve Osten - for his selfless service as Treasurer for 1988. Joking aside, Steve has served the club in almost every capacity since its founding: past president, treasurer and founding Board member. Take a break, Steve. We'll probably dragoon you again in a year or so.

The following is an advertisement which came to the NEWSLETTER last month. Though it was not accompanied by the appropriate tariff, it is too good not to share; maybe it will change your life:

HELP WANTED

Ultralight Mechanic/instructor or CFI/A&P to work November - April in tropical sunny clime. Must be skilled with repair and maintenance of Rotax engines, related systems and creative aircraft repair/modification. Float experience useful. Reply: YCF, Box 954, South Wellfleet, MA 02663. Include description of your experience and references.

Ah, visions of bikini-clad beauties on sunny shores, thronging around the jut-jawed ultralight pilot instructor. Go get 'em, guys, how can you resist? Bob Breeden, where are you, now that we need you?

MEXICO FARMS

by Rob Brooke

All week the weather prophets pulled my chain - would it rain, wouldn't it rain? I finally stopped

asking and resolved to make my decision Friday evening. On Friday, September 30th, the forecast seemed good, so I decided to go.

I picked up Chuck Popenoe at his home in Bethesda at 7:45am and we headed for Whitman Strip. I'd had a call from Jim Laurenson earlier in the week. He said he'd like to tag along as far as Winchester, so I expected to see him at the field.

When Chuck and I arrived at Whitman Strip at 8:45, we were surprised to find Jim Birnbaum already aloft in his Phantom and Art Loeb putting the finishing touches on pre-flighting his Firestar. I got busy unfolding my Firestar and Chuck wheeled out his J-3 Kitten and started his pre-flight.

During the drive to Whitman, both of us expected good weather but we were concerned at the amount of ground fog which still hadn't burned off. By the time we were ready to fly, the ceiling looked O.K. and there was no fog at Whitman Strip. Since I had no significant cross-country time in the Firestar, we decided to make a stop at Winchester so I could check my fuel situation. Jim Birnbaum, Art Loeb and Jim Laurenson decided to start out on this first leg with us and we all got away, one after another, at about 10:00am. I was last to take off. I turned on a heading for Catlett and let it climb to 2000' and looked around for Chuck in his yellow Kitten. He had circled a couple of times waiting for me, since we had assumed that I'd be a little slower than the Kitten and it would be easier for him to play catch-up.

Art had already declared his intention to drop off at Catlett. The two Jims, Birnbaum and Laurenson, had talked about going on to Winchester, but the Phantom got way south of the course and there was no way that the MX was going to be able to keep up with the Kitten. A third complicating factor appeared in the form of a low layer of cloud just west of Catlett. This seemed

(Mexico Farms, cont.)

to be a layer of ground fog which had risen high enough to provide a 1500' ceiling but had stopped rising and hadn't burned off. The sun wasn't damaging it much, being shaded by a much higher layer of cloud. The result was that Chuck and I got well above this low-lying cloud and there we stayed all the way to the Blue Ridge.

The cloud layer was patchy enough that my occasional views of the ground through holes rewarded me with enough landmarks that I knew we were on course for the Route 50 gap in the Blue Ridge. Both of us were a little concerned about what might be on the other side of the mountains. If the cloud layer had obscured the pass and the way to Winchester, we would probably have turned back to Whitman. All sight of the other three planes had been lost as soon as we got above the lower clouds.

As we approached the Blue Ridge, the ridgeline, and peaks here and there could be seen rising above the cloud layer into our clear zone. The closer we got, the more sure I became that we were heading exactly for the Route 50 gap just beyond Paris, Va. As we approached the gap, we were heartened to see the cloud layer disappearing on the eastern slopes of the mountains, and that all beyond, stretching away to the west, was hazy but free of cloud. Route 50 led west to Winchester like an arrow.

The Kitten led the way onto the runway at Winchester where my engine hourmeter revealed that the flight had taken 53 minutes! Chuck added a gallon and a half to his fuel-sipping Kitten; I was able to squeeze two gallons into the Firestar. This experience revealed a couple of new facts about the Firestar: I was able to keep up with the Kitten quite comfortably (cruise airspeed of 60 mph) and I was consuming in the neighborhood of 2 gph of fuel while doing it. That was good news indeed.

After refueling and waiting around awhile to see if Jim and Jim would make it, Chuck and I took off for Cumberland. We agreed to fly first to Chuck's farm just east of Cumberland, buzz the house to let people know we had arrived, and then fly over to Mexico Farms Airport.

I was to take off first and then take up station on Chuck. Well, that was a mistake. We never found each other after take off. Chuck said that I just went up like a rocket and right on out of sight. For my part, I started looking around when I reached 2000' and never did find Chuck. I circled awhile looking, flew back to the airport to see if he was still on the ground (he wasn't) and finally decided to fly on to Mexico Farms direct.

The flight was great. Landmarks kept popping up right where they were supposed to be, I had a bit of helping wind and finally, the railroad, the Potomac River and Interstate 48 all came together and led me right to Cumberland and the airport. The mountain scenery was fantastic - one ridge after another. As I was letting down to get in the pattern, I spied Chuck just arriving from the direction of his farm. He landed just behind me. My air time since Winchester was one hour exactly, and I had used just two gallons of fuel. Neither of us had seen the other since taking off from Winchester. It's a BIG sky!

Mexico Farms is a perfect recreational airport. Two runways covered with beautiful soft grass, hangars, a funky little "hang-out" with some stoves and a soft-drink machine, and some of the most beautiful landscape to fly over I've ever seen. The only drawback is its proximity to Cumberland Airport just on the other side of a loop in the Potomac River (here about 50' wide). One of the fellows who use the field advised me to keep my patterns "close in and about 600' AGL" to avoid conflict with the

(Mexico Farms, cont.)
pattern at Cumberland. That suited me fine. At 600', I could see Cumberland's runways and keep well clear of its pattern.

Halfway through the afternoon, Art Loeb showed up with his Firestar in tow to join our small squadron. Chuck and I had already been joined by Chuck's son, Charles, who car-topped the family Kasperwing, and by Bob Warriner of USUA Club #4, also a car-topping Kasperwing pilot. All told on October 1st, we had two Kasperwings, two Firestars and the J-3 Kitten. We had expected USUA #4's Paul Nash and his Bobcat, but he had a business conflict and had to beg off.

When darkness shut down flying on Saturday, we tied down the planes and repaired to Chuck's farm for supper and beddy-bye. While the beer lasted, we sat out on the porch trading lies and tapping our feet while Chuck drew some pretty respectable Bluegrass out of his fiddle. First thing in the morning, we were treated to the most incredible sunrise - coming up over four lines of mountain ridges with ground fog in the valleys between. As soon as we could slug down some coffee, we got packed up and back to Mexico Farms for the patented EAA Pancake Breakfast (I think EAA must own controlling interest in Aunt Jemimah!). Seriously, the breakfast was great, and we were looking forward to flying at the field and an EAA Bean-Soup and Sloppy-Joe lunch.

But rain, predicted for afternoon, started moving in not long after breakfast. I had taken advantage of a super-heavy dew to sponge off my plane and had gone up for a brief flight to "dry her off". She wouldn't dry! I found rain, and it was still spitting when I landed. That made up my mind for me. The rain was coming from the west; I had to go almost 100 miles to the east. It was time to go now. The remaining fuel in my jerry can put my fuel load just above four gallons - plenty to make Winchester

and a refueling opportunity. I hastily bid farewell to everyone and was away toward Winchester.

I flew in spitting rain for the first fifteen minutes but then flew out of it for good. It beaded up my face shield a little, but didn't get my clothes wet, so it was no problem while it lasted. I was happier after it quit though. I got myself up to 3500' where I stayed, in order to clear the steady succession of ridges which passed under me. I made Winchester in about forty-five minutes with almost three gallons of fuel still in the tank. I decided to keep going.

That proved to be a bad decision, but not a disastrous one. I continued to sail on, making great time all the way to the Route 50 gap in the Blue Ridge. As soon as I got on the east side of the Blue Ridge mountains, I started encountering significant headwind. I could see my ground progress slowing down and my heading had constantly to be adjusted southward to compensate for drift. It was not long before I wished I'd gassed up at Winchester. The fuel level in my "view-tube" gauge seemed literally to plunge toward the bottom. The earth below me unreeled at a molasses-like crawl. I did a lot of checking my watch. I became more assiduous in finding likely emergency landing sites as I flew along.

The end of the story is anticlimax. I did make Whitman Strip non-stop from Mexico Farms with a (gulp) half-gallon to spare. I'm glad I made it, but I'm angry at myself for the decision to keep going at Winchester. The numbers were good: one hour and forty minutes air time, 3.6 gallons used for almost 100 miles of distance. I can thank my plane for getting me home. Next time, I'll either start with a full tank or stop for gas at Winchester.

The upshot was a great trip both ways, discovery that I have a powerful cross-country machine in

(Mexico Farms, cont.)
the Kolb Firestar and the discovery of a wonderful cross-country destination in Mexico Farms Airport. Weather permitting, I'll make this fly-in an annual event on my personal calendar. With a stop for fuel at Winchester, it's within range of any ultralight. Next year, y'all come!

WHITMAN STRIP

Whitman Strip, the fount and haven of ultralight activity in Northern Virginia, is again being called to account by the Board of Supervisors of Fauquier County. Ed Whitman has been asked to go before the Board in November to answer some questions about his operation, some of which may pertain to our use of Ed's property as an airport.

Because things are a little unsettled, Ed has decided to hold off on changes in hangar occupancy until after the hearing. He has stated that there doesn't seem to be anything in the wind which should unsettle people who have been using the field. But if any of you have been pawing the turf waiting to move your plane to Whitman Strip, be patient. As soon as the hearing is past, Ed assures us that things will get moving again.

FLIGHT PLAN

Nov 3 - Club Meeting. 7:30pm at the Washington Gas Light Springfield Center.

CLASSIFIED

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

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. (301)791-1681, Hagerstown, MD.

FOR SALE 1984 Quicksilver MX, Rotax 377, Handbury Ballistic chute, 124 hrs TT, excellent condition, always hangared, 1/3 hangar share at Warrenton-Fauquier airport available. \$2950. Steve Roth, H (703)-860-1883, W (703)893-2767.

* * * 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
VICE PRESIDENT	Tom Simmons	703/548-7420
SECRETARY	Rob Brooke	301/279-2816
TREASURER	Steve Osten	703/644-5514
NEWSLETTER EDITOR	Rob Brooke	301/279-2816

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*** 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
Rt. 1, Box 514A (Lenah Road)
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Robert Brooke, Editor
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THE NEWSLETTER

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