

# U S U A FLYING CLUB 1 NEWSLETTER

February 1989

## FROM THE LEFT SEAT by Rob Brooke

You've probably heard the joke. It goes like this: Question - "What is Time?" Answer - "Time is Mother Nature's way of keeping everything from happening at once!". In January, brethren, everything was happening at once. I'll try to fill you in.

A week or so after the January meeting, a Board Meeting was held. My agenda was to hammer out an activity schedule and then talk about whatever else was important. We spent most of the meeting discussing Whitman Strip. Ed Whitman has decided that operating through his lawyer isn't getting him anywhere, and has asked the club, particularly Paul McClung, to give him a hand. Paul, Steve Zeamer and Ted Wachtmeister have since been in contact with the Fauquier County Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors, and there is reason to be optimistic that the field's troubles can be resolved.

Following right on the heels of those discoveries, Ed Whitman was stricken by a serious illness, and now all considerations of Whitman Strip seem beside the point. The committee to "Save the Field" has put itself on hold while the whole club takes station at Ed's bedside to do what little we can to pull him through his illness. We'll take up that quest again when Ed's back on his feet and feeling good.

As if all that were not enough, Paul McClung and I have been making a video about refinishing wooden propellers. We'll probably call it "This Old Prop" and inflict it on the membership at some meeting where I couldn't find any other program. It'll probably be finished in early February.

Discussion of the year's activities reveal that cross-country flying and hangar parties seem to be at the top of the popularity list. That old favorite, "hangar building", will probably languish for the foreseeable future, in spite of popular demand. I have been approached by several pilots who spent more time last year working on their planes than flying (through no fault of their own). They now give vent to desperate oaths that, "Hell or High Water", they're going to get those problems solved. Well, I know how they feel. I spent more time last year working on my plane than flying. I too have taken desperate oaths to make up for it in 1989. So if motivation is required, there is plenty of it cooking for some significant flying this season.

With luck, a schedule for 1989 will be ready for you next month. It will certainly include a two day flight to the field of the new Southeast Virginia club, USUA Flying Club 6. I have spoken to H.O. Malone and Al Carpenter of that club and we have a solid invitation to fly down for a weekend of flying and camping in May. Some other interesting events are under consideration, and I am looking forward to a truly rewarding and exciting season.

Fly Safely!

### ADVISORIES

Dues are pouring in at a pretty good rate. If your recent lobotomy has interfered with your short-term memory, check the mailing label on this newsletter. If a dollar sign (\$) appears by your name, either 1. you haven't paid your dues or 2. we have screwed up and lost track of your selfless act. If 1., consider your life goals and send in your key to happiness in 1989; if 2., call your friendly newsletter editor and tell him what a jerk he is. But get it straightened out! Come late March, all those names with dollar signs will disappear from the membership list. Don't let yours be among them!

The club's Board of Directors met in mid-January, ostensibly to discuss and lay out the 1989 schedule of activities. That agenda was tabled in order to take up the more important issue of Whitman Strip and what can be done to save it. More on that subject will be made available as events occur. Please stay tuned. The deliberations on the 1989 schedule will be taken up at the February Board Meeting.

Many of you have responded to the questionnaire which went out with the last (January) newsletter. The responses that have come in reveal that no, we don't know it all, and there are some things the club could be doing differently. If you have been planning to send yours in but have been postponing, why not do it now, before the next board meeting. Your opinions will be heard and will have an effect.

Your attention is called to the meeting on February 2nd. Tom Gunnarson, of Windstar Aviation, will be with us as guest speaker. Windstar Aviation is the closest full service ultralight dealer to northern Virginia and Tom himself is doing a great deal with USUA in the

area of competition. Come prepared with questions about both aspects of Tom's interests.

### ED WHITMAN

On the weekend of January 21/22, Ed suffered a sudden internal hemorrhage and was taken to Fauquier Hospital in Warrenton where he spent some time in the intensive care unit. He is now out of intensive care, but his condition is only described as "stable", which is neither heartening nor illuminating.

Paul McClung has been in touch with Ed by phone and says that his spirits are good but that Ed's condition is very serious. At this writing, the doctors attending Ed have not pin-pointed his trouble.

Those of us who know Ed realize how much he has given us. For anyone wishing to send a card or some other expression of sympathy and well wishes, his address is:

Ed Whitman  
Room 217  
Fauquier Hospital  
500 Hospital Drive  
Warrenton, VA 22186

Ed's condition has improved enough that he can have visitors. However, things are tenuous enough that if you're planning to visit, you should probably call the hospital to make sure it's O.K.

### ELECTRONIC AVIATION by Lew Clement

There's a dark overcast sky and the wind is moaning in the eaves. It feels as if it might snow. You decide it's no day to bore holes in the sky in your open-air flying machine. Not even a good day to do

(Electronic Aviation, cont.)

those maintenance items you've been putting off. Definitely the kind of day to put another log on the fire and dream of spring days which are gentler on the human constitution.

Does this mean that you shift your mind into neutral, flying-wise, until the thermometer climbs back up the scale? It doesn't and it shouldn't. There are several flying-related skills that you can sharpen without leaving the warmth of your home. You can practise attitude flying, power trimming your airplane and dead-reckoning navigation until you are as comfortable with them as you wish. And there are other fine points on which you may prefer to work as well. How?

A growing number of pilots and would-be pilots are turning to computers for this purpose. If you have a computer, you may want to add such a program to your library. If you don't (own a computer), this might be the excuse you've been looking for to purchase one of those magic boxes. Microsoft Corporation has a program called

"Flight Simulator". The third generation (Version 3.0) was issued in 1988. It is available for IBM PC, PCjr and compatible computers. SubLogic has a similar program for Apple, Atari and Commodore 64, XL and XE computers. There may be other computers which can use some version of these programs as well. The major difference between the Microsoft and SubLogic programs, I am told, is that the Microsoft version features a Cessna 182, whereas in the SubLogic program, you fly a Piper aircraft. There are secondary aircraft to fly, as well.

In both programs, you use your computer keyboard (plus joysticks or a mouse, if you choose) to operate all airplane control functions. The computer screen is your view of the world. It shows you the instrument panel, provides you with one or more windows to view the outside

world, and a map display. The program permits choices of weather conditions and time of day and many flight locations in the United States. Options allow you to choose the kind of flight you want to make (e.g., flight training, instrument training, navigation) as well as where you want to fly. You can fly visually or by instruments, but for those who want to limit their practise to skills with ultralight applications, be assured that there are enough options to keep you busy throughout the winter.

In the coming months, I'll tell you more about this powerful program and some of the ways you can use it to sharpen your ultralight flying and have fun at the same time.

#### PRODUCT REPORT DET-302

The DET-302 is a combination tachometer and hourmeter. It is marketed by SkySports of Hendersonville, NC. This small lightweight unit has a digital display with black numerals on a silver-gray background. Case dimensions are small, two and a half inches wide by one and a half inches high by one half inch thick. It is extremely light, weighing only three ounces or so.

The DET-301 operates by inductively sensing the spark pulse from a spark plug wire. The sensor is nothing more than an ordinary insulated wire wrapped around the spark plug lead at a convenient location. The wire is led to the instrument and looped through a couple of holes in a small tab which is part of the plastic of the case. There is no direct electric connection to the circuitry of the instrument. The wire merely acts as an antenna for the spark impulse and only needs to be near the instrument to activate it.

Installation is simple. The instrument can be mounted behind a panel



(Product Report, cont.)

with a small rectangular cut-out for the display. There are no mounting holes in the instrument, but it can be glued, taped or held in place with a metal strap. It could as well be mounted on the front of a panel (velcro would work well) or be fitted to a custom bracket to be clamped to tubing. The sensor wire should not be routed near sources of major electrical disturbance (like the "other" spark plug lead or a spark coil or magneto) but seems otherwise to be fairly forgiving. The farther the instrument is from the engine, the more turns of the sensor wire must be wound around the spark plug lead to provide enough impulse for the longer distance. Start with two or three turns and test. Keep adding turns, one at a time, until the tachometer reading settles down to a stable and reasonable value. Eight feet of sensor length will demand about ten wrapped turns on a Rotax engine.

In operation, the DET-302 switches itself on automatically when the engine is started and displays the full engine rpm in even hundreds. It continues to display the engine rpm for as long as the engine is running. When the engine stops, the display automatically changes to show total engine time (since instrument installation) in hours and minutes. The engine time display remains for one minute after engine shutdown before the DET-302 turns itself off.

The DET-302 has lots of advantages and a couple of significant disadvantages. The advantages are:

1. It's very, very lightweight.
2. It's very easy to install.
3. It's dependable and accurate.
4. The display is always on and very easy to read.

5. It's maintenance free (for a while). The display is driven by an internal lithium battery which is supposed to be good for years. No constant changing of 9V batteries required.

6. The hourmeter display is great for timing flights and for making accurate logbook entries. It helps to establish fact rather than fiction (or wishful thinking) if you're trying to find out about performance. It also makes possible a safe and sane engine maintenance program.

7. It's vibration-proof.

The disadvantages are:

1. It's pricey, \$95 at Sky-Sports.
2. The unit must be returned for battery replacement when it runs down.

Well, it would seem the ayes have it. Lots more advantages than disadvantages. If the battery and unit last, if it can go on for years accurately counting engine rpm, bearing witness to the hours put on the engine and measuring flight times, it will earn its price. Functionally, there is no better instrument. The two best-known competitors, Digitron (another digital display) and Westach (analog needle-type) suffer by comparison. They are both significantly heavier than the DET-302. The Digitron is erratic, is prone to "double" the reading at full throttle and consumes a regular diet of 9V batteries; the Westach needle gives you only a "ball-park" reading, sort of a "give or take 500 rpm" feeling. That's not very good for setting cruise throttle.

So give the DET-302 three stars for function and ease, and hold the fourth star (price/performance) in abeyance until time shows how long

(Product Report, cont.)

it lasts, and how much hassle it is getting a new battery installed. If the DET-302 gets its fourth star, it's a winner!

FLIGHT PLAN

Feb 2 - Club Meeting, 7:30 PM,  
Washington Gas Light Co.  
Springfield Center. Tom Gunnarson,  
guest speaker.

CLASSIFIED

Trying to sell that pile of old tubing? Got an extra engine that might do someone some good? Ready to move up to the Whiz-Bang Special and need to sell your current ultralight first?

A classified advertisement in this space is FREE to club members in good standing (paid your dues?). Mail your ad to your friendly editor now! Next month service guaranteed.

\* \* \* 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.

1989 CHAPTER OFFICERS

|                   |                |              |
|-------------------|----------------|--------------|
| PRESIDENT         | Rob Brooke     | 301/279-2816 |
| VICE PRESIDENT    | Tom Simmons    | 703/548-7420 |
| SECRETARY         | Paul McClung   | 703/787-0631 |
| TREASURER         | Charles Maples | 703/941-8167 |
| 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)  
Aldie, Va. 22001



Robert Brooke, Editor  
1809 McAuliffe Drive  
Rockville, Md. 20851

# THE NEWSLETTER

USUA  
FLYING CLUB  
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