

July 1989

FROM THE LEFT SEAT
by Rob Brooke

Lately I have been trying to analyze why our flying events, planned with such enthusiasm and care, are attracting so few participants. There is a possibility that the flights on the schedule simply have no appeal - that we screwed up the activity plan royally. But the sense I get when I talk to the people I had assumed would be interested in sharing these experiences, is that they are having trouble deciding and committing in advance. People are dithering because the weather report for Saturday looks marginal on the preceding Tuesday.

I used to belong to a sailing club which raced 15' dinghies. Local races were a lot like our one day cross-country flights, and away regattas were a lot like our two-day campout cross-country flights. That club had similar problems getting strong attendance at events and for exactly the same reasons: early trepidation about the weather and an urge to hedge one's bets "in case the weather is bad; don't want to waste a weekend". The result - no commitment, no serious plan to participate.

I want to impart to you some wisdom offered by one of the "old dogs" of that fleet, and that is the two words, "Always Go!". What he meant by that advice is this: decide by looking at the schedule which events you really want to share in, commit your personal schedule to those events, and forget the weather reports - Go! The time to decide that the weather is just too awful is on the dock on the day of the race.

Now I would modify that advice somewhat for us ultralight pilots. Dinghy sailors are used to getting wet, so it makes some sense to hook up the boat trailer and head for the regatta in pouring rain, in hopes that conditions will be all right for sailing, even if the rain persists. Not so for ultralights. But I would suggest an "Always Go!" philosophy which says that commitment to an event should persist until the weather actually blows it out.

The good news is this: I have been living by this philosophy in both sailing and flying for many years and I can remember only a handful of events which were weathered out. Most of the time, even when the weather prophets are promising the worst, everything has turned out O.K.

So, if you really would "Rather Be Flying", as the bumper sticker says, stop trying to hedge your bets. Decide which flight you really want to make and make it. Unless, at last, you are prevented.

Fly Safely!

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USUA FLYING CLUB #1 SUMMER FLY-IN

JUNE 24th & 25th

Whitman Strip Airport
Catlett, Virginia

Fly in, drive in, walk in, get there any way you can. Bring your tent and spend the night. See ultralights Actually Fly! Bring the family, have a picnic lunch on the grass, or On the NEW NEW NEW Club picnic tables lovingly assembled by Program Chairman Tom Alder and his elves.

All day Saturday: Local flying, events to be orchestrated by Paul McClung, capped by a grilled chicken supper (7:00 PM) from the fork of a noted local chef. Guests, come, enjoy; club members, bring a dish (coordinate with Tom Alder, McLean, VA - 893-1245), the club will provide the chicken, the fires and the soft drinks.

Saturday evening: Campfire, bad jokes and room to pitch your tent.

Sunday morning: NO REVEILLE! Sleep as late as you want. Local flying and an all morning welcome to our guests from EAA 186, who will make their June Luncheon with us. The club will provide grilled hotdogs and hamburgers and soft drinks. Lunch is at 12:30 PM. Local flying during Sunday afternoon, strike your tents and talk about next year.

We hope for some fly-in guests, not only from EAA 186, but from USUA #4 and USUA #6 as well. If the weather is flyable, we promise an enjoyable weekend for flier and ground-pounder alike!

ADVISORIES

Please welcome new member Bob Parillo. Bob is a resident of Burke, VA, has his private pilot license and is interested in building a Kolb TwinStar.

The schedule for July is full of interesting stuff. Now is the time to mark your calendars and take advantage of as many events as you can.

WINDSTAR FLY-IN

By recent club standards, the Windstar Fly-in of June 3/4 was a resounding success. Jim Birnbaum (Phantom), Rob Brooke (FireStar) and Jim Laurenson (MX) took off from Whitman Strip promptly at 8:30 AM, destination Frederick, MD. The flight arrived exactly on schedule after a "by the numbers" flight where Dominic Cardy and Jim Kelly were already on the ground, having flown Dominic's 2-place trike from Freeway Airport. Almost immediately, the flight was joined by Greg Kilpatrick (Quicksilver Sport) who flew in from his field near Dickerson, MD, soon followed by brother Mike, arriving by car to take over as pilot for the flight to Windstar. And to top it all off, Jim Kelly's Drifter 2-place taxied up with two ladies aboard, Larry Sullivan's wife as pilot, and USUA's own Michele Lewis riding shotgun.

The flight's enthusiasm was somewhat dampened when the Frederick Airport manager came tooling up in the "company car" and told everyone to leave as soon as possible, that ultralights would not be welcome at Frederick until the new runway construction was complete. Something about the only runway being an ILS runway, etc. etc. He did say that ultralights would be welcomed back when the second runway is available, but it was still a discouraging experience.

The flight left in all due haste, taking off in separate small groups as refuelling was completed. The 64 miles to Harford County Airport was flown in very hazy conditions with relatively poor visibility, but the last planes arrived by 1:15 PM, plenty of time for a bite to eat and a gas-up before the airshow. Already on the field was faithful ground support, Tom Simmons, who was busily assembling his Weedhopper for the rubes and delivering his "So ya' wanna buy an airplane" spiel.

It was rewarding to find a good contingent from USUA #4 at the field. Chuck and Charles Popenoe, and Bob Warriner had car-topped their Kasperwings up for the weekend, and Paul Spadin showed up to lend a little class to the proceedings, though he realized after an hour or two of checking his pockets, that he had forgotten his airplane. It had also been hoped that the southern Pennsylvania clubs would show up. They are a lot closer to Windstar than is USUA #1. However, they didn't make it to stay, though Tom Gunnarson said a few Pennsylvania pilots had been and gone before USUA #1's arrival. Tough.

The middle of the afternoon was occupied by an airshow which lasted until 3:30 PM. During the show, Tom Simmons was busily putting the finishing touches on the repair work on his Quicksilver Sport, assisted by Rob Brooke, Tom Gunnarson and Mike Pastelak. Even passers-by were "Tom Sawyered" into helping. By the time the airshow was finished, so was the Sport and Tom was able to join the hoard of ultralights which took to the sky after the airshow flying ban was lifted.

In spite of the continuing haze, the sightseeing was good. The Susquehanna River, Conowingo Dam and the Chesapeake Bay are just a short cruise away from the airport. The air was smooth and the flying continued until nearly sunset.

(Windstar, cont.)

The rest of the evening was spent tying down, pitching tents and getting to a restaurant for a very late and protracted supper. However, in spite of the wait for a table large enough for the whole gang, the food was great. Everyone returned to his tent full and tired, the requisite recipe for a good night's sleep.

Sunday dawned clear but hazy. The wind was light and there was some "dawn patrol" flying, but as the morning wore on toward the planned departure time of 10:00 AM, the wind kept building. By 10:00 it was averaging 15 mph out of the northwest with stronger gusts from time to time. Three pilots made the decision to give it a try, at least as far as Clearview Airport. Jim Birnbaum, Rob Brooke and Mike Kilpatrick took off for the trip home. Flying was O.K., but at the higher speeds necessary to make headway against the wind, fuel consumption was high. Too high, as it turned out, for Mike's Sport. Within sight of Clearview Airport, his tank ran dry and he landed safely in a farm field adjacent to the airport. The field's owner, delighted by the whole affair, provided Mike with a gallon or so of gas, and he was soon on the ground at Clearview getting a tankful.

After another huddle to discuss conditions, it was decided that the flight would have no trouble making it to the Kilpatrick's field at Dickerson, MD. The three planes took off and continued to make better and better time as the afternoon passed. The wind was letting up a little, and each course change to the south helped a little. Arrival at Dickerson followed a nice and untroubled flight.

On the ground Jim and Rob decided that their remaining fuel would easily get them to Whitman Strip so, rather than wait an indeterminate time for Greg Kilpatrick to show up with fuel, they took off

for home. Having acquired the habit of fast flying during the slog west against the wind, they kept the pedal to the metal. The course kept swinging more and more south at each checkpoint. By Leesburg, the wind was helping instead of hurting and once on the final heading for Whitman Strip, it was providing a pretty good boost (It's fun to pass cars!).

Jim and Rob arrived at Whitman Strip after a pretty short last leg. It was still mid-afternoon and flying conditions were good, but they were two tired puppies, so it was "Put the planes to bed and see ya' next week".

SAFETY

Plagued as we are by the inability to get liability insurance, and the constraint on our free use of airports which would be otherwise available to us, it is worth while considering how much liability coverage an ultralight pilot really needs. It's hard to visualize an ultralight doing \$100,000 worth of damage if it is being flown by an experienced pilot who doesn't have a death wish. But there are occasions when it is easy to hear the cash register go "Ding, ding, ding" when an otherwise competent pilot suffers just a moment of inattentiveness. The following is reprinted from the May, 1989 issue of Flight Forum, the newsletter of the "Illini Skyriders", EAA UL 30:

WANT TO KEEP ALL OF YOUR BODY PARTS INTACT? As the flying season begins, we all need to be reminded about propellor safety.

All our flying machines have a deadly weapon mounted on them. As ultralight pilots, we are concentrating on keeping the engine running, maintaining airspeed, avoiding midair collisions and otherwise flying safely. Don't forget about basic propellor safety. Good habits have a tendency to fade after a

(Safety, cont.)

long winter of inactivity. Maybe you've been flying mostly by yourself with no one else around. Please, be extra careful. Your friends will appreciate it.

FOR PILOTS;

Do not operate the engine unless you or someone else who knows what he's doing can reach the throttle and ignition quickly. The ultralight must be constrained or tied down if someone is not sitting in the cockpit at the controls. The best way to avoid getting into your own prop is NEVER to leave the cockpit (or release your seat belt) while the engine is running. Some of you may start your engines while standing alongside and then climb in. Wise spectators will keep in mind their escape routes in case you trip, fall headfirst into the seat and jam the throttle wide open.

Always yell, "CLEAR!" and wait a second or two before you start the engine, even if you think there is no one else around. While warming up the engine and taxiing, stay alert for stray dogs, stray spectators or whatever. Avoid taxiing close to buildings and watch your prop blast: you may throw small rocks and debris back.

Don't do static run-ups or engine break-ins where spectators would be at risk.

FOR SPECTATORS AND PILOTS:

Be very careful any time you walk near a spinning propellor. Keep your balance and footing and watch around you so you aren't knocked into the prop by something else. Concentrate and stay alert every second. You are literally risking life and limb that you will not trip on your shoelaces or slip on some dog doo and ruin the whole afternoon.

Even if you are well out of the

danger zone, keep an eye out for other spectators or any dangerous situation. Avoid distracting those who are close to the prop. Be alert to unexpected events, such as a minor mishap on the field, which causes people to forget about the spinning prop.

Always avoid standing in line with the spinning propellor disk during startup or any high-power ground operation. If the prop or its mountings are going to fail, it will more likely occur at those times. Debris from the prop or anything which strikes it will be projected outward in a "shrapnel zone". Always avoid standing or moving in proximity to an airplane with a spinning prop in a position where the pilot can't see you.

ELECTRONIC ULTRALIGHT by Lew Clement

This month, I'll talk about the computer I use to operate my Flight Simulator (FS) program. Each computer on which this program (whether Microsoft or SubLogic) will operate has its idiosyncracies. I only know those of a 2-floppy disk system; this is for any of you with such a computer.

The Flight Log routine is an easy way to keep track of the flying time you accrue, especially since it breaks down into day, night, instrument and total time. After about 8 hours of logged time disappeared on each of two disks, I learned more about the routine. A 2-floppy disk system does not cope well with the Log routine. Some systems won't even accept it. Others, like mine, will operate it as intended until you load its memory to capacity, then it dumps not only the flight time but the whole routine. So now I use the Flight Log to record my flight time for each flight, but I save it on paper rather than on the disk. Since doing that, I've lost no more time on

(Electronic Ultralight, cont.)
the Flight Log.

MAY 28 - MYSTERY FLIGHT
by Rob Brooke

The Flight Simulator program comes with big chunks of territory over which you can roam as part of the basic program disk: Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles-San Diego, Chicago and New York/Boston. I've mentioned previously that there are separate scenery disks for the whole U.S. If you want to fly somewhere else, such as the DC-Virginia area, you can purchase the appropriate scenery disk from SubLogic.

Here again, the 2-floppy disk computer requires special instructions, this time to load the scenery disk. It's easy to do - so easy that they forgot to include it in the FS operator's manual. After your operating system (MS-DOS or whatever) is up and running, make your B drive the default drive. Bring the FS program up on the B drive. Insert the scenery disk in the A drive. Follow the FS program menu instructions for loading the scenery disk. The written instructions which come with the disk tell you to use "CTRL-E" as part of the process; mine works with "Shift-E".

You may have noticed that the more flight parameters (wind, weather, time of day, etc.) you load, the more flicker you get on your screen during a flight. It stands to reason, the more information the computer must handle each time it moves the airplane along, the more time it takes (even though we're talking about micro-seconds) and the more apparent it becomes. So don't use more parameters than you'll need on a given flight. They're dumped at the end of each flight, so you won't retain any from an earlier flight.

This concludes the series on electronic ultralights. Keep up your FS flying. There's more to be learned in the FS program than you can experience in one - or maybe several - winters.

The day dawned sunny and clear, an almost perfect flying day. The passage of a minor cold front at mid-day the day before had left a typical post-frontal clarity. The temperature was on the cool side and a wind of 12 - 15 mph was blowing out of the north.

Charlie Maples, club Treasurer and Phantom pilot (he flies some other contraption too, but I can never remember what it is) had given me a phone call a day or so earlier and we both felt that, unless conditions or a large number of other pilots were against it, we would try to take the Mystery Flight to Sky Bryce. Not only would it be a good flight, but we could join the EAA 186 Luncheon scheduled for 12:30 PM.

And that's how it ended up - Charlie Maples and I heading off to Luray alone. We got off about 10:15 AM, having been held up by a problem with Charlie's recoil starter. I made light of the issue, promising Charlie that I'd prop-start him wherever we stopped. We managed O.K. throughout the day, but the memory of my sore muscles through the following week will make me think twice about such promises in the future.

Navigation was about as simple as it gets. The air was so clear that the Route 211 gap in the Blue Ridge forty miles away was clearly visible as soon as we had taken off from Whitman Strip. The only complicating factor was the brisk crosswind which kept us crabbing all the way to Luray. The hour and twenty minute trip revealed a 37.5 mph ground speed. Because of the strength of the wind blowing across the ridgeline of the mountains, we had planned in advance to get up to 5000' or so to avoid turbulence. However, as we approached the Blue Ridge, we ran into some wave lift (Mystery X-country, cont.)

which carried us up to 6000'. It was chilly there, but the view was stupendous in the clear air. All the details of that extraordinary mountain range were visible north to south from horizon to horizon.

As soon as we cleared the ridge, we cut the power and lost altitude to get back down into warmer air. It was still cool on the ground at Luray Caverns Airport, but it felt like Miami compared to 6000'. Our planes attracted the usual contingent of gawkers as we quickly refueled. We wanted to be at Sky Bryce by 12:30, in time for the EAA 186 Luncheon.

Getting over the Massanutten mountain range just to the west of Luray means a hard climb right from takeoff. There is a sort of high altitude valley which runs up the middle of the range in which an occasional emergency landing area can be seen, but you still have to get back up to 5000' for safety. We were across the ridges fairly soon and dropping back down into warmer air and the welcoming expanse of the Shenandoah Valley. Again, the sense of being able to see everything was incredible. I grew up in the Shenandoah Valley but, ground-bound as I was, I never experienced its "valley-ness". To see it from 5000' with both of its limiting mountain ranges equally visible, the valley floor stretching away to both sides, was unforgettable.

After a comfortable half hour flight, we popped over the little ridge which hides Sky Bryce Airport and gratified some golfers with our approach and landing. Most of the EAA 186 folks were just finishing parking their planes (three Rutan canard designs, a zippy little Lancair and a Cessna 172) so Charlie and I were well in time for lunch.

Lunch at Sky Bryce is nice. You sit in a spacious windowed dining room whose view is of the ski slope which, later in the season, will

have people riding the lifts and "grass skiing". We pulled together some tables and had a thoroughly enjoyable time eating, warming up and talking about airplanes and the foibles of their pilots. Among all the EAA 186 folks, I was especially glad to find George Lutz, one of USUA #1's staunchest members.

At Charlie's suggestion, the two of us planned a return flight by way of Front Royal Airport rather than Luray. I found this suggestion appealing for two reasons: it offered some new sight-seeing opportunities on what was becoming more and more a perfect flying day, and it would allow me to check out Front Royal Airport. I wanted to find out if it would provide a good alternative refueling spot, now that Winchester is closed to those of us who can't get liability insurance.

All my needs were gratified. The view up the valley and around the northern tip of the Massanutten range was fantastic. I particularly enjoyed getting over next to the windward slope and picking up some ridge lift. It gave me a nice economical cruise up the valley and a great sense of "contour flying" the ridge. And Front Royal is a great little recreational airport at which ultralights are more than welcome. It will be my standard fuel stop between Whitman Strip and Mexico Farms from now on. I even got along well with the airport cat.

Getting home to Whitman Strip from Front Royal was another case of navigational kindergarten, given the unlimited visibility of the day. The course was a straight shot through the Route 522 gap in the Blue Ridge (visible from the airport), to Warrenton (visible from the gap) to Whitman Strip (honest to God, I could see the Whitman Strip hangars from Warrenton). By late afternoon, the wind was no longer cross; I could point the nose right where I wanted to go - (Mystery X-country, cont.)

and I knew where that was because I could see it. It just doesn't get any better or easier than that.

End of story. Charlie and I had an effortless flight from Front Royal and put a fine finish on a 141 mile round-robin cross-country flight. If my past experience is any guide, it will be years before such a scenic cross-country route coincides with such perfect conditions for sight-seeing. It was as clear as a bell forever! For sheer awe-inspiring vistas, it even beat the USUA #6 flight.

FLIGHT PLAN

June 24/25 - USUA #1 Fly-in and Campout, Whitman Strip, Catlett, VA.

June 25 - EAA 186 Luncheon, Whitman Strip, Catlett, VA, 12:30 PM

July 8 - Garber Facility Tour.

July 15 - Mystery Cross-country flight. Takeoff from Whitman Strip, 10:30 AM.

July 29 (30) - Cross-country lunch flight to Kentmorr Airport, Kent Island, MD.

CLASSIFIED

FOR SALE - Weedhopper C, easy to fly; inexpensive to buy. Rotax 277 engine (rebuilt and running like a top), low mileage airframe, brand new state-of-the-art Aqualam sails (day-glo green and black, always hangared and loved to excess. Offered to a good home at \$1800. Tom Simmons, Alexandria (703)548-7420.

FOR SALE - 1984 Quicksilver MX, excellent condition, always hangared, 125 hrs. TT, all flights/engine time logged, Rotax 377, freshly repacked ballistic chute, steerable nosewheel, disk brakes, \$3000. Steve Roth, Reston (703)620-6097.

FOR SALE - Phantom ultralight, engine rebuilt by Windstar Aviation, new sails, excellent condition, strobe, ballistic chute, hangared at Whitman Strip. \$4500. Call Steve, (703)349-9089.

FOR SALE - '84 StarFlight 2-place, Rotax 503. '85 StarFlight XC-280, Rotax 447. '88 Quicksilver MXL II, new kit, save shipping. Loss of hangar forces fleet reduction! Jim Kelly, (301)475-5519, 6-9 PM weekdays.

* * * 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
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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: _____

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THE NEWSLETTER

USUA
FLYING CLUB
#1

