

USUA FLYING CLUB 1

NEWSLETTER

December 1990

FROM THE LEFT SEAT

by Tom Simmons

As I write this, on the day after Thanksgiving, the sun is shining, the air is warm, and it is hard to think of the flying season as being over. But, nonetheless, cold weather is on its way, and most of us will probably be putting away our planes for the winter. But let's not put away our thoughts of flying!

The 1990 flying season brought new maturity to USUA #1's cross-country flying. It is never too early to start planning for 1991. Here's what I suggest.

Cold winter nights by the fire are very conducive to sectional gazing. If there's a destination you've been dreaming of, check it out. And make a flight plan. If you're really ambitious, call up the intermediate airports and find out if ultralights are allowed, and what, if any, special regulations apply. Put together a comprehensive summary showing distances, estimating times and planning the number of days involved.

When it comes time to plan out the 1991 schedule, bring your flight plan. It's much easier to get your trip taken seriously when there's an existing flight plan to examine. Don't misunderstand me - I'm looking forward to the odd trip to Orange County as much as the next guy. But what about... Texas?

Fly Safely!

ADVISORIES

Our monthly club meeting on December 6th will also be the occasion of our annual elections. Let's turn out in force to elect our new slate of draftees! They deserve our support. And our thanks!

After receiving permission from the members in attendance at November's meeting, I have sent off a letter to Bill O'Brien at the FAA supporting the definition changes he has proposed and generally supporting the USUA as our self-regulating body. Anyone interested in the letter can see a copy of it at the meeting.

SALUTATIONS

by Tom Simmons

This issue marks my last newsletter, and my last month as president of USUA #1. I am fortunate in knowing that both positions are likely to improve under my successors.

Tom Allder has been nominated for the president's post, and I am enthusiastic about the contribution he will make during 1991. For several years, he has been one of our most active pilots, undaunted even by a succession of unfortunate accidents that might have sent lesser devotees to pursue other sports.

Jim Laurenson stands eager and ready to become newsletter editor, and, indeed, has been a regular contributor for some time. I hope that other club members will be forthcoming with contributions to the newsletter, in order that the burden not rest solely with Jim.

Other posts nominated at our November meeting include Chuck Tippet for vice-president and John Shalestock for safety officer. Charlie Maples was again nominated, *in absentia*, to serve as treasurer, but has had to decline because of time constraints. We will need a volunteer at the December elections.

While I am thrilled by the excellent slate of officers, I am disappointed at the low turnout for the nominating meeting, and also at the low interest our club demonstrates in holding office. We have nearly 50 members at last count, and it seems that about 40 of them expect to just pay their \$15

bucks and be waited on. Guess again. This isn't AAA. Members are expected to provide the services as well as receive them.

That being said, I believe we have had one of our best flying seasons ever, in spite of poor weather much of the time, and I am anxiously awaiting the beginning of our 1991 season. Up, up and away!

MY FAVORITE ACTOR (PART 3)

by Jim Laurenson

This third and final part of the story of my flight to and from Jimmy Stewart Airport in Indiana, PA begins with Jerry Eastman and me departing for home from Ebensburg Airport after leaving Jimmy Stewart (about 20 miles NE) earlier in the day. (See the last two issues of the Newsletter for Parts I and II.) The air was heavy with moisture, low clouds were draped here and there (lots of here), the wind was from the SE (it figures), and the day was getting on.

Jerry and I headed SE, hoping to find a hole over the first (and tallest) of the many ridges of mountains lying in our path. It soon became clear that this was not going to happen too easily, if at all. The clouds hung in a solid layer from about 5,000 feet down to the mountain tops (about 3,000 feet). Jerry headed south, which was more towards his goal of Manassas VA than my goal of Frederick MD. The last I heard of him on the radio was for me to follow him because he saw a Simmons hole that went over the mountains and into the next valley, and he was "going for it." Try as I

might, I couldn't find any holes in that blinding white wall.

Looking at my sectional, I noticed that the mountains seemed to diminish to the NNE (the ridges run NNE to SSW). Plus, there was a pass where a highway cut through. Unfortunately, when I reached the pass, I found cars crawling down from the pass out of a very distinct wall of cloud, with their headlights on, their windshield wipers going, and, I swear, fog horns blaring. I circled for a while, hoping the pass would open long enough for me to shoot through, but the clouds only seemed to get thicker. Eventually, I continued NNE, assisted tremendously by the increasing SE wind. The clouds only got worse. Great. For a moment, I thought I could head back SSW, but a glance at my fuel level and the sectional told me there was no way I would be able to make it anywhere in that direction in time. So, I headed NNE again, still hoping I could get across the ridge and land at one of the many airports beckoning, no, shouting to me from the other side.

Eventually, it became clear I was not going to get across that ridge until I got fuel. So, with another look at the sectional, I noted Clearfield-Lawrence Airport approximately north of me in Clearfield, PA. Given the increasing wind, lowering clouds, and lack of landmarks below, I was a bit uncertain of my exact location. I noted Tyrone VOR, however, lying due south of the airport and, more or less I believed, south of me. I plugged the frequency into my radio, hit the "from" function, and surprise! I was lying smack dab on the 0 degree radial! Staying on it and

heading north, I quickly came across Clearfield. And not a moment too soon, as they say. The ceiling was meeting the floor, and the raindrops were beginning to fall -- and hurt! (This was the first time I had ever felt I actually needed a VOR. I highly recommend knowing how to use them. Contact me if you are unsure of how.)

Clearfield was very friendly (as was every airport on this trip). With good conversation to pass the time, the heavens swirled about outside and the day waned. Eventually, it became clear I was grounded for the day (so I was only just realizing that?). One of the folks there, who's airplane was stranded at another airport because of the weather, let me put my ultralight in his hangar. One kind couple "going towards University Park Airport" (it turned out to be 20 miles out of their way -- and they knew it) gave me a ride to pick up a rental car. It was a long drive back home.

Several days later, when the weather looked promising, Judy and I drove to Clearfield to get my ultralight. Judy dropped me off and headed to University Park to drop off the rental car and wait for me to fly over and pick her up. That was a great flight, and it was very satisfying to finally make it over that damned ridge. I "yahooed" so loudly people on the ground probably thought I was nuts. I found University Park easily (it's a big one) and landed just in time to see Judy driving up. We turned in the rental car, fueled up, answered countless questions about ultralights, and flew off to the south. Another unusual southerly was picking up,

however, and I started to get a bad feeling, though at least there were few clouds in sight. The wind alone turned out to be bad enough though...

After an admittedly very beautiful flight over several ridges, and a quick fuel stop at the small and pleasant Huntingdon Co. Airport, we barely made it to Chambersburg before darkness fell -- along with my general attitude on life, the universe, and everything (including ultralights)! We were only 30 miles from Reese's! Another rental car (but luckily a very cheap "rent-a-wreck"), and off to the comforts of home, once again ultralightless. (You may be wondering "What wussies! They can never just rough it in the hangar or a local flea bag?" Believe me, we would have, but we always seemed to have something important to do the next morning; and who ever would have thought that with two full days in which to fly back...)

Another several days later (this was getting old fast), I soloed the rental car back to Chambersburg. The winds had swung to the west (finally!), but it seemed that as soon as I showed up at the airport the winds started swinging south again and began picking up speed. By the time I was ready to go, they were absolutely howling (15 to 30 mph)! This was one of those times in your life when you begin wondering where you went wrong, what you did to deserve this, are you having a nightmare, is there a God, and where's mommy? Luckily, Chambersburg is a parachute center, and there was a lot of company to be miserable with. Actually, we had quite a grand time watching movies ("When Harry Met

Sally" -- good flick!) and videos on parachuting (including some great stunts with airplanes, one of which involved a wing walker -- with a hidden parachute I was told -- jumping off a biplane and being "caught" by the wing of another biplane that had gone into a steep dive below!).

Late in the afternoon, while I was contemplating selling my ultralight and buying stock in rental car companies, the winds began to subside. As soon as I saw ten minutes of less-than-20 mph on the wind gauge, off I went on a great but short flight. Another "yahoo" escaped my lips as I topped the last ridge, and Reese's field came into view. Down I spiraled, and landed.

I felt as if I had just returned to my home town after many years fighting some unknown war in a distant land, a stranger to those who once knew me best. Dogs growled at me, and parents pulled their children inside as I walked down the emptying streets . . . oh, sorry. Okay, so I just tied down the ultralight and drove my car (completely paid for, I might add) home. What started as a one-day, 270 mile round-trip pilgrimage to an airport named after one of my favorite actors, turned into a 10-day, 320 mile Bermuda triangle. I'm sure there's plenty of lessons to learn from this one.

I still like Jimmy Stewart though.

DON'T FORGET TO VOTE!!
The December meeting marks our club elections. Let's at least give our tired volunteers a solid mandate.

WHY JOIN USUA AND BECOME A STUDENT OR REGULAR PILOT?

by Jim Laurenson

For two main reasons. First, it will help keep the FAA from over-regulating. The more they see us regulating ourselves, the less they're going to feel the need to do it themselves. This has been the case for lots of similar situations to one extent or another (e.g., hang gliders, parachutists, sail planes). I don't think the question is will FAA regulate, it's how much? Second, you probably will be grandfathered into whatever FAA comes up with. If you are a USUA student or pilot before they require you to become one, you probably automatically will be a student or pilot afterwards also. So please, pay USUA the \$5 to become a student pilot, or the \$25 to become a pilot. The certifications are good for as long as you are a USUA member. It's incredibly cheap, especially considering the benefits to you and the sport. Contact me (703-266-9532) or one of the other examiners in the club for details. (If you're worried about what I'll charge, don't. I'm more concerned with you becoming a safe, USUA pilot than with me making money. This goes for training too. Believe me, if I wanted to make any money -- or even break even -- I would get out of ultralight training/examining altogether!)

AND THE WINNERS ARE!

by Tom Simmons

The results of flying competitions held at our October fly-in have been tallied, and the overall winner is Jim Laurenson, using a handicapping system of his own devising. (Hey! Wait a minute.)

Seriously though, I'm sure the tally was scrupulously fair. The simple fact that Jim Laurenson was running the events... (Hey! Wait a minute.)

Really seriously now, high scorers in specific events were: Tim Hansen in the first bombing event, Chuck Tippet in the second bombing event, Jim Laurenson in both balloon pop events, and Tom Simmons in the streamer catch... (Hey! Wait a minute.)

The lesson seems clear. If you want to win anything, you have to be a club officer (or Tim Hansen!). So let's see those hands.

More important than the scores were the safe and courteous procedures observed by all pilots who participated. Thanks to Jim, and a cadre of volunteers, for running the events. Let's look forward to more competitions in the year to come.

FLIGHT PLAN

December 6 - Club meeting,
Washington Gas Light, Springfield
Center, 7:30 PM.

MARK YOUR CALENDERS

On Saturday, February 23rd, at the Aviation Museum of Byrd Field in Richmond, USUA #6 and USUA #1 are hosting a Safety Seminar for ultralight flying. John Ballantyne, Bill O'Brien (FAA) and Homer Kolb will be presenting. The seminar should be fun and informative for all attendees.

More important, however, is the fact that Bill O'Brien is, by his own definition, either our best friend or our worst enemy. He will be wielding singular power over the future of ultralight flying, and solid attendance at events such as this one could go a long way toward convincing him that ultralight pilots are a serious, safety-minded group of aviators whose privileges should be protected. Think about it.

CLASSIFIEDS

QUICKSILVER MX - Excellent condition, always hangered, hand-deployed chute, instruments and pod, new fabric, other updates. \$3,000. Call Jim, eves. (703) 266-9532

QUICKSILVER SPORT - Excellent condition, almost always hangered, 75 hrs. TT with steerable nose wheel, BRS 3 chute, wheel fenders, dual CHT, tach and Hobbs, strobe. No engine, as a result of hanger theft. \$5,500. Call Don, eves. (703) 378-9769

ROTAX 277 - with geared reduction drive. Zero hours since complete overhaul. \$350. Call Tom, anytime (703) 548-3347

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****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 PM 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.

1990 Chapter Officers

President	Tom Simmons	703/548-3347
Vice-President	Tom Alder	703/914-8922
Secretary/Treasurer	Charles Maples <i>Duns</i>	703/941-8167
Member at large	Jim Laurenson	703/266-9532
Member at large	Paul McLung	703/787-0631

***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.

Articles and non-commercial ads may be mailed to Tom Simmons, 311 North Pitt Street, Alexandria, VA 22314; or faxed to 703/548-3138. Commercial ads must be accompanied by a check.

Membership Application: mail to Charles Maples, USUA Flying Club #1, 4656 Conwell Drive, Annandale, VA 22003

Application must be accompanied by \$15 annual dues.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE: HOME () _____ WORK () _____

ULTRALIGHT TYPE _____

USUA MEMBER # _____ UL REG. # _____