



The Leader In Recreational Aviation

Chapter 1344

P.O. Box 582

McPherson, Kansas 67460

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Chapter Meeting

07-18-06 7 p.m.
McPherson Airport

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Thanks Dwight & Ruth!

Dwight & Ruth Hill were incredibly kind and invited us out to their hangar for our meeting last month. Had the weather been a bit better, Dwight had also offered rides in his Stearman. Unfortunately, the temperature was high and it was windy so he didn't give any rides that evening. He did offer rides on the following Sunday, early in the morning when it was still cool and before the daily winds kicked up. I don't know how many made it out for a ride, but I do know Mike B. and his Dad went out and Mike says a very hearty "Thanks" to Dwight.

I didn't go for a ride that Sunday morning because my wife and I were in Dallas visiting the kids and our grandson. Since the weather has continued to be VERY hot, I haven't made arrangements with Dwight for my ride as yet. I haven't forgotten it, though.

I almost forgot, Mike also said "thanks" to Dwight for letting him fly the Stearman. Mike says he now knows what it's like to fly a "real" airplane.

Mike B. is also thinking of upgrading his handheld transceiver so if you're interested in buying a good used one, talk with Mike at the meeting. To the best of my knowledge, there's nothing wrong with the one he

has right now, he just wants a new gadget. It seems that's a never ending occurrence amongst pilots.

Has anyone any news about Eldon A? Is he getting better and back home?

I haven't talked with Russ M this month, either. How's the progress on the Sonex, Russ? Hope you've felt good enough to work on it.

I had an enjoyable time helping a friend hang a VW engine on the nose of his homebuilt. It was the preliminary hanging, and I'm sure it will be on and off of the plane a few more times before it's completed, but it was the first I've actually helped on a plane. Kinda revved my internal engine to get building my own.

Area Events

1st Saturday of every month – Ponca City Airport Pancake Breakfast (PNC)

2nd Saturday of every month -- Beaumont Hotel (SN07) All-You-Can-Eat Pancake Breakfast

3rd Saturday of every month – Alva Regional (AVK) Alva, OK

4th Saturday of every month – Augusta Municipal (3AU)

4th Saturday of every month -- EAA Chapter 455 Fly-in Breakfast at Enid Woodring Regional (WDG) from 8:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

8-19-06 – Zenith Aircraft Company 15th Annual Open Hangar Days at Mexico, MO
For more complete information send an email to info@zenithair.com

8-27-06 – Falls City Rural Firemen's 5th Annual Fly-in/Drive-in Breakfast at Falls City, NE (FNB)

With age comes wisdom Overheard while flying the Philly Class B:

PHL Tower: US Air 123 cleared to land Runway 27R.

US Air 123: Cleared to land runway 26R.

PHL Tower: I wish we had a 26R. But you are cleared to land runway 27R.

US Air 123: Apologies, sir. Realized the mistake as it left my mouth and wished I could have taken it back.

PHL Tower: Understood. Something like that ended my first marriage.

Unknown: All of our first marriages.

No, that's not what I said.

"I was about to lift off with my instructor from a class D airport in a Robinson R-44. The route of flight would take us very near neighboring Class C airspace. The controller questioned us after we gave our initial heading..."

Controller: Staying clear of all airspaces?

My instructor: Except yours.

(short pause) Controller: Did you just say, 'Up yours'?

We were both laughing too hard to respond.

Seeing is believing Overheard while in the pattern at FNT:

Tower: N12345 traffic at your one o'clock.

N12345: Looking for traffic.

[long pause...]

Tower: N12345 traffic now ... your traffic at three o'clock.

N12345: Still looking. I only see birds over there.

Tower: Well, look close. One of them has a transponder in it.

Confessions of An Airplane Nut

Part 3

Sometimes life takes you by the hand and leads you with little baby steps, just one halting step at a time. But sometimes it's "Don't take your mind off it for a second or you'll miss it altogether." That feeling of headlong rushing into the unknown is kind of how I've been feeling the last month or so.

When I left off last time I had just taken my first baby step into that wonderful arena known to the rest of you AN's out there as "Flight Lessons." I capitalize that because it is not something mundane like "fly fishing" or "wood carving" or even, (hush my mouth) "building an airplane." Flight Lessons are where you push your timid, hesitant spirit out into the vast unknown and try to do something that man just was not meant to do.

Now you know that I can wax as poetic as the next guy about the sheer exhilaration to be found only in a small airplane at the moment that the wheels leave good old terra firma and you are well and truly airborne. I have experienced that numerous times before and await it again with almost physical longing. However that may be, I was not prepared in the least for the vast difference in the experience caused by my own hands being on the controls. That first flight (see AN Part 2) gave me a memory that I will never lose . . . BUT it also was just the barest nudge over the top on this wonderful rollercoaster called Flight Training.

I have been an AN for (probably) longer than I can remember. I have memorized the shapes, names, and numbers of multitudes of airplanes. I have become intimately familiar with the principals of flight and the principal human figures who noodled out those concepts which make our mastery of flight possible. I have watched small planes, big planes, fast planes, slow planes, gliders, prop-driven planes, jets, helicopters, and gyro-planes. I have watched kids toys, model planes, movies of planes, photos of planes, drawings of planes and just plain dream planes. I thought that I knew everything that I would ever need to know about planes and that flying them would be just as easy as walking. You know, smooth and graceful, nail that landing every time, every hand and foot movement just as automatic as if I had been born in a plane. Well, WAKE UP BUSTER!, this is work!

Now don't read me wrong, I'm not chickening out, I'm just getting my head screwed on in the right direction. I have discovered that flying is not all that intuitive, especially for an old (eh, um,) "guy" with many years of ingrained habits in our friend the automobile. It is not intuitive to steer with your feet. It is not intuitive to turn the "steering wheel" even when your intention is to go straight ahead. It is not intuitive to point the nose at Conway when your flight path is straight towards McPherson. It is not intuitive to speed up and slow down with one hand, point the nose with your feet, and intentionally make your stomach queasy with your other hand, all the while talking in gibberish to some poor, lonely soul in a distant, ivory tower whom, you are hoping, doesn't come back with some arcane command that you don't understand. You know, I really am loving every minute of this!

I had a really neat experience last Saturday at the McPherson Airport (MPR), I soloed (i.e.; flew all by myself) for the very first time. I thought that when I got to this stage of the narrative I would be explaining how I sweat so much I had to go back and clean out the airplane (or that I had done something else nasty and had to go back and clean out the airplane.) However, that was not the case – this time at least. My Certified Flight Instructor (CFI), I will call her J for short, directed me to fly to MPR and “shoot touch and goes.” We proceeded to do that for an hour or so with some of the landings looking pretty good and some . . . well . . . not so good. The air was calm, the sky was clear, and that Cessna 152 just did not want to come down and stay there. Well, after a while J got bored and said “Let me out.” Having prepped for this moment I asked, “Do you really mean it?” “Yup, she said,” she’s quite a talker. Having ascertained where she wanted out I stopped the plane on the taxiway, looked around nervously for that powered parachute that had been hanging around the pattern, and waited for her to complete the endorsements in my logbook. Just before unhooking her headset she looked me in the eye and said, “Just do it like we’ve been practicing. If it doesn’t look right, just power up and go around. If it looks right then just land and come back here and pick me up. Oh, and give me my coat, it’s cold out here.”

That should have been when the instant shot of adrenalin hit but, no, it wasn’t there. Make the traffic call and power out to the runway, is it there yet? Nope, not yet. Smoothly put in the power, wait for 65 indicated and smoothly pull it off the runway . . . now? Maybe just a little – this is SO cool! Stay straight with the runway, keep her climbing for pattern altitude, watch the smoke – still almost no wind. 300 feet of pattern so start my crosswind leg – don’t let it slow down. Coupl’a seconds of straight flight and turn downwind – call that in to MPR traffic. There’s pattern altitude, right on the nose and time to start my “BCGUMP” check. Yup belt’s still tight, carb heat is on, gas lever is still in the “on” position, wheels are still attached, mixture is set to full rich and ready to reduce power to 1500 for landing. There’s the white arc so first notch of flaps down, speed 85 knots, second notch of flaps and reduce speed to 75 knots while turning base, no sign of the paraglider. Turn final and get her lined up on the runway – DANG, why am I way up here? I obviously turned base WAY too early. OK, no problem, carb heat in, power up full and start climbing back up. Slowly get the flaps back up while maintaining positive climb. No problem, we’re back up to pattern real quick. Set it back up again, just like last time except wait a little longer to turn onto that base leg. This time it looks right, maybe still just a little long but well short of those huge 1,000’ marks. All the power is out, all the flaps are down, right on the centerline – keep it from drifting, level it out – NOT TOO MUCH – that’s better, now, start to flare – feel for the runway – there it is and NO BOUNCE – keep the nose up and let it settle – Hot Dog, I made it.

I asked J and a couple of her fellow CFI friends later how they could bring themselves to exit a perfectly good airplane and let a neophyte like me take a shot at bending it real good. She just looked at me and said, “I just stand alongside the runway and watch, and then I puke.” I am really glad that she waited until we were back on the ground before she told me that!

Tom Stinemetze
The Airplane Nut