



Montana and the Sky

Montana Department of Transportation

Aeronautics Division

Vol. 62, No. 8

August 2011

Camp Educates Students on Aviation Careers

By David J. Hoerner, Safety & Education

The Aviation Career Academy (ACE) was held June 21 and 22. This program gives school children, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade, a chance to see what happens in the aviation world. Seventeen excited kids from around the state attended this year's program.

The Academy touched on remote control flight training. Each student learned how to fly and land the RC airplanes with the help of Helena Flying Tigers RC Club members.

The next stop was Fort Harrison where the students got a small look into how our military personnel train. A Humvee rollover simulator showed the children the difficulty of getting out of the Humvee in case of an emergency rollover.

The high light at the Fort was the being able to use the weapons training simulator. Nine students shoot at objects on a 20 foot by 30 foot big screen. Each weapon's accuracy was recorded, with everyone improving in their shooting scores. This was the biggest video game they will ever see.

The next stop was a hike to the Cromwell Dixon landing site on the Continental Divide. The children learned about Dixon's exploits with his early day aircrafts and how he lost his life in Spokane a few days later

The seconded day started with the children taxiing around a look-alike Cromwell Dixon aircraft. Sidney Wilhelm and friends along with the help of her dad, Ken and grandfather, Clayton, built the replica and Sidney's group received Grand Champion Float at this year's Vigilante Day Parade.

Next was a tour of the Helena airport and a ride in one of the new giant fire trucks. The tour was followed by Young Eagle Flights for all the students by MDT Aeronautics staff and Helena EAA members, thanks to all who donated their time and aircraft. The day ended with a talk on aviation careers and awards for completing the program. It was a great two days for the children.

This program is sponsored by MDT Aeronautics and is a great opportunity for our children to learn about aviation. Hopefully, we can open the minds and eyes of our children into reachable opportunities.



Students gave a thumbs up to the program put on by the Helena flying Tigers RC Club members. We thank them for their support of this program.



After a hike up to the Cromwell Dixon landing site the students had the opportunity to pilot a replica of his aircraft.

Administrator's Column

Sad news: Dave Sclair, owner of the General Aviation News and Flyer passed away recently. Dave and Mary Lou Sclair worked at, managed or owned community newspapers for many year. In 1970, Dave and Mary Lou bought Northwest Flyer (now General Aviation News) and moved to Spanaway, Washington. Dave served many organizations and had a variety of interests. He lived 23 years on a residential airpark which led to the creation of Living With Your Plane, a database of airparks nationwide and collection of information and best-practices that helped advance the lifestyle of pilots "living with your plane". Dave and Mary Lou supported Montana aviation and participated for many years with an exhibit at the annual Montana Aviation Conference. Condolences to Mary Lou, Robyn, Ben and Deb, Savannah, Brenna and Jack.

FAA shutdown: After a two-week shutdown, the Senate passed a pro-forma, unanimous consent bill (H.R. 2553) which ended the partial FAA shutdown, including the Helena Airports District Office (ADO). After being strongly urged by the President, DOT Secretary and Senate Majority Leader the Senate Commerce Committee, led by Chairman Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.), reluctantly relented, and agreed to pass the House AIP/FAA Continuing Resolution which contains a provision to abolish EAS in 13 carefully targeted cities, including Glendive, MT. In a press release issued by Senator Baucus he said, "I received a personal commitment from Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood that Glendive and all of our rural communities that depend on Essential Air Service will have continued service to prevent further harm to our rural economies." The Continuing Resolution will only extend FAA funding, operations and get taxes flowing once again into the trust fund until September 16. What happens after that is anyone's guess as Congress will have only a few days after they return from recess to sort out the details of another short-term extension or a long-term bill. The Helena ADO is working furiously to catch-up and get grants out the door for this construction season and I appreciate that.

Nominations Sought: The Transportation Research Board's Airport Cooperative Research Program (ACRP) is soliciting nominees to serve on oversight panels for its fiscal year 2012 program. Although funding is pending, the Oversight Committee (AOC) wishes to proceed in anticipation of continued funding for the FY 2012 program. Descriptions of the new research projects are available online at: http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/acrp/acrp_announcement2012.pdf. Members of the ACRP project panels serve voluntarily without compensation, but reimbursement for reasonable travel expenses is received. The six to eight-member panels bring a diverse range of expertise and perspective to the project providing technical guidance and counsel throughout the life of the project. Nominations are due no later than September 15, 2011, and self-nominations are accepted. Panel member nomination instructions are available at: <http://www.trb.org/ACRP/CRPInfoPanelMembers.aspx>. This program provides valuable information and support on a variety topics pertinent to airport operations.

Panel Participation: I served on the panel for the recently released ACRP Report: *A Guidebook for the Preservation of Public-Use Airports* that describes why public-use airports close and identifies measures and strategies that can be undertaken to potentially help preserve and prevent an airport closure. The guidebook presents step-by-step procedures on how to identify risk factors that can increase the potential of a future airport closure and how to formulate an effective airport preservation program. It also identifies potential groups interested in preserving public-use airports and offers practical checklists for identifying and addressing issues as part of a comprehensive strategic airport planning program in support of preservation efforts. You can access the report on the ACRP website: <http://www.trb.org>.



Montana and the Sky
Department of Transportation

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Official monthly publication of the
Aeronautics Division
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Montana and the Sky
is published monthly
in the interest of aviation in the
State of Montana.

Third Class postage paid at
Helena, Montana 59604

Editor: Patty Kautz

Calendar of Events

August 19 – National Aviation Day. For further information visit <http://www.wright-brothers.org>.

August 19-21 – Tenth Annual Montana Fun Weekend Fly-in and Car Show. Fly-in Breakfast Saturday and Sunday. Bowling ball drops on Saturday before the drag races. Prize for direct hit is \$350.00. All aircraft and cars invited with \$100.00 awards for top three aircraft on display, and top five cars. For additional information contact the airport at (406) 873-8683 or go to www.cutbankairport.org

September 9-11 – Mountain Search Pilot Clinic, Helena. For further information phone Dave Hoerner at (406) 444-9568 or email dhoerner@mt.gov.

September 10 – Polson Fly In, Chapter 1122 of the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) will be hosting a Fly-In at the Polson Airport (8S1) on Saturday, September 10. Admission is free. The festivities will begin with a breakfast of pancakes, ham and eggs for only \$5 starting at 8:00 a.m. There will be all sorts of aircraft on display, including float planes, homebuilt, experimental and antique aircraft. There will be raffle prizes, concessions, and airplane and helicopter rides. Drawings for free AV Gas for pilots who fly into the Fly-In. Camping is free. Kids can sign up for future Young Eagle rides. For additional information call Mauri Morin at (406) 249-2250



Hoerner's Corner

By David J. Hoerner, Safety & Education

Learning to fly a helicopter can be exhausting and demanding. Almost all primary training is performed in light piston engine trainers and most of these helicopters have correlators to help keep the RPMs in the green arc or flight range.

Because most of these trainers do not have a governor, the pilot or student pilot must continually adjust the throttle or RPMs.

When adding power, more throttle needs to be added (RPMs) to compensate for more drag created by the added angle of attack of the blades.

When subtracting power, throttle must be subtracted (RPMs) because of less angle attack of the blades. In either case, the pilot must be diligent to adjusting RPMs.

While flying one of these light piston helicopters in level flight, the nose seems to swing slightly to the left and the pilot has to keep adding right foot and more RPMs to keep the aircraft facing straight forward.

What could be happening? Less power means less torque or more right foot and the possibility of the start of an engine problem.

In the same scenario the nose of the helicopters moves slightly to the right. The pilot has to add more left foot to keep the helicopter going straight. What could be happening?

Adding left foot means the fuselage wants to swing to the right and to stop the turn the tail rotor has to produce more thrust. There could be a problem with the tail rotor anti-torque system.

In either case the pilot might be getting an idea that something is not right before an actual emergency, a landing and examination might be wise.

In a turbine helicopter the governor compensates for RPMs, so these possible problems would be harder to recognize.

Thank You

The family of Mike Biggerstaff wishes to send our deepest and heartfelt thanks to David J. Hoerner, State SAR Coordinator and the volunteers who helped with the search effort in Miles City. Lonnie Leslie, Charles Rogers, Chad Cyrus, Dallas O'Connor, Tracy O'Connor, Dave Hartman, Darren Pluhar, Paul Grutkowski, Monte Reader, Randy Schwartz, Roger Meggers, Darin Meggers and Ross Hartman.

It is with great humility that we thank you. Your efforts will never be forgotten. Mike was truly blessed in his life. He loved aviation and through this love he met so many that he called friends. He touched the hearts and lives of so many. You can bet that he will be flying co-pilot with all of you fellow aviators in the aviation world who knew and respected him. Since Mike's last flight to heaven, he is flying above the clouds now.

*Connie, Brandi and Brian Biggerstaff
Priscilla and Jerry Hogan and family
Maxine and Derek Cross
Ron and LouAnne Biggerstaff and family
Dan and Sherry Biggerstaff and family
Ardis and Franc Rice and family*

Forest Service Grateful for Partnership with Aviation Community

To: All the participants and supporters of the back-country airstrips,

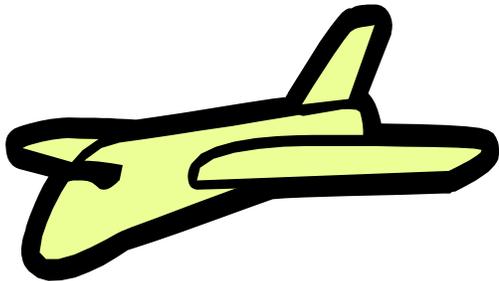
I wanted to let you know how much the effort and attention that you continue to have for the Shafer Meadows, Meadow Creek, and Spotted Bear Airstrips is contributing. The work session this past weekend at Schafer Meadows was a great example – installing new bear boxes for food and attractants to be able to be stored in for both campground users and float parties, digging a new outhouse hole (by hand!), fixing rails and fence, cleaning bear boxes and outhouses, clearing encroaching brush on the airfield, and filling in gopher holes. What a great day. I had the best day of all in getting to go from group to group and listen and learn!

We, the Spotted Bear Ranger District really value the help that you all contribute – it is making a big difference. My first work day at Schafer in 1995, there was enough planned and needed projects at Schafer that could have kept the whole group going for 3 days or more. This continued effort has contributed to less needing to be done on an annual basis. Several of us have talked if we should cut back to every other year and realistically, I am concerned that we'd lose the partnership that we have and think that a smaller amount on an annual basis is the best. I know historically there were evening programs, and if the interest is there for that in the future we'd be glad to pursue.

This past weekend, I wanted to compliment all that were there as this was the best clean-up and storage of food and attractants – I know having a black bear come through Saturday afternoon and sample the grass and forbs on the edge of the airstrip helped inspire the extra attention, but I know all of you join us in wanting to be sure no bears (black or grizzly) become habituated to food or garbage. Please continue to use the bear resistance storage boxes at the campground. They do work!

Thanks for the great partnership and working relationship – Montana Pilots Association, Montana Department of Aeronautics, Recreational Aviation Foundation and the expanded invite to other friends and pilots! Getting to work with folks like you is the best part of the job – thanks for the commitment and passion. Happy Flying and Trails!

DEB MUCKLOW
District Ranger



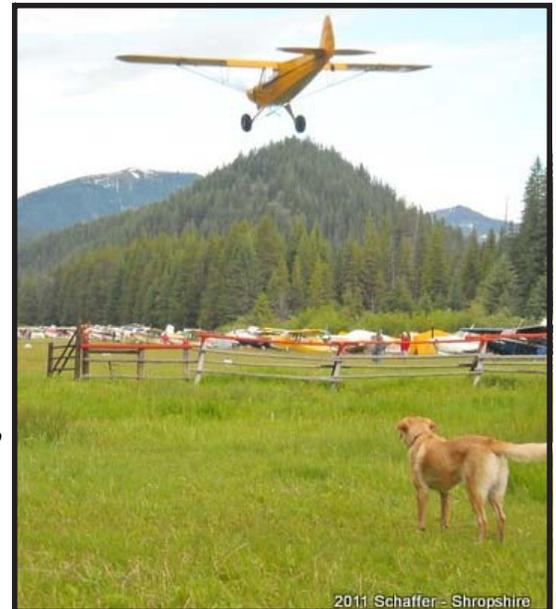
More than thirty aircraft flew in to Schafer for the weekend. Even our four legged friends partake in the event. Photo courtesy of Robert Shropshire.



Bear box crew! Photo courtesy of Robert Shropshire.



Loren Smith flew in and provided a great dinner of pulled pork, beans, corn on the cob and all the condiments to go with it. Thanks to Loren's sister, E.J and the rest of the chefs for the fine meal. Photo courtesy of Rober Shropshire.



Volunteers Generate Successful Work Sessions

Del Bonita

By Wade Cebulski, Airport/Airways Bureau

The annual hands across the border work session at Del Bonita, was a huge success considering the high winds and cooler than normal temperatures. More than thirty people showed up by aircraft, motorhome and private vehicles from near and far to participate in the work session. Fencing, gopher bombing, and weed eating was part of the projects accomplished this year. The runway is in excellent shape due to the wet spring that we have been experiencing, it is so green it almost makes your eyes hurt.

After all work was completed our fine neighbors from Canada provided barbequed hamburgers, salads, vegetables, and a vast array of desserts from cookies, cakes, pies, sodas, and hot coffee. It was a feast fit for a king. The Canadian participants outnumbered the Americans about three to one, so we will have to try and reverse that trend next year.

After lunch the customs workers from both sides of the border gave short briefings explaining how things work, crossing the international boundary. The Canadian rules being somewhat more relaxed then US customs. The US Customs is in the process of building a new facility, which should be done in the near future. Don't forget to file your E-APIS and enjoy these fine facilities.

Thanks to all who participated.



Workers flew and drove in to participate in this event.



Wade and Geanette Cebulski are regulars at all the work sessions.

Benchmark

By Ken Wilhelm, Airport/Airways Bureau

The 2011 Benchmark work session had a fair turn out in spite of the many other events going on the same weekend. Volunteers changed the windsocks, sprayed weeds, fire cut wood for the campground, and repaired fencing that was damaged by flood waters. The Vigilante Hanger of the Montana Pilots Association provided an excellent steak and corn on the cob lunch. Thanks to all for making this work session a success.



Work session volunteers from left to right Harold Dramstad, Lowell Hanson, Ken Wilhelm, Keaton Surratt, Scott Newpower and Jim Booth. Not pictured: Danna Wulchuk, Mark Newpower, Doug Monger, and Randy and Renee Kienitz.



Jack's Pilot

By David J. Hoerner, Safety & Education

The sky out to the west of Shafer Meadows displayed ever changing shades of darkness as night settled in. I stood by my airplane staring down the grass runway, hoping my passenger; Jack would appear as if by magic. A few days earlier he'd made it clear, he had to be out on Friday and I was sure Jack got what Jack wanted.

If it would have been anyone else I would have departed an half of an hour earlier. Flying in the mountains in the dark is not a wise decision and not something I looked forward to.

I'd just made the mental decision to spend the night and settled down in the cook shack. The commotion of the mules and horse outside the building gave warning that someone was coming up the trail.

It was Jack, his son, a personal hunting guide and another person who had come from Florida to hunt elk. He was fit to be tied over a disagreement at the hunting camp. In haste they had departed without a packer to guide his party back to the airstrip.

They had taken the wrong turn at the big river, and in the dark had fumbled around for hours searching for the right trail.

Jack spoke, "I need to be in Florida in the morning, you can get us out of here?" It was a question, but more telling than asking.

There was no moon so the image of the high mountains faded into a black hole or darkness as I strained to see Lodgepole Mountain across the runway.

I replied, "Flying in the mountains at night is dangerous, at times it could be suicidal."

Jack looked sternly into my eyes and said, "can you do it or not?"

I'd been flying in these mountains for thousands of hours and knew them like my own yard. I replied, "I can get you out of here, but it will take longer. We'll have to fly as high as the base of the cloud permits and stay in the big valleys all the way back to Kalispell."

Jack didn't want to take his son on the same flight as the one he was on, so we loaded him and the guide. The shock of the darkness squeezed my soul as we lifted off the ground. The image of the faded mountains loomed close as we eased our way down the Middle Fork River.

"I can hardly see anything out there," Jack said in a strained voice. As the valley narrowed and then widened, it was hard to keep sight of the mountains.

I stopped his endless battering of questions by telling him to look for mountains. He took the scolding well and penned his face to the side window.

We flew directly over the top of the blue colored river that showed on my GPS. The lights of the Flathead Valley came into view and we were on the ground in a few minutes. I departed for the return trip to Shafer. It seemed too had darkened up and not having someone to look out the right window was concerning. I flew directly on top of the trail left from GPS on the flight out and rounded the corner at Beaver Hill; this 400 foot high hill is just directly west of the runway.

As I expected, the tree lined airstrip was completely invisible. "I whispered, "Come on guys do your job." As if in unison four lanterns turned on.

I had given instructions to light lanterns and place two of them across the runway from each other about half way down the runway. The other two were to be placed at the turnout into the parking area.

Without visual reference with the surrounding trees, I came in high and slow. The airplane settled steeply, a burst of power slowed the decent and I landed with a thud between the first two lanterns. What normally was a sixty minutes flight took two hours. Both passengers had been worried and were now ready to get out. There was no time for celebrations.

The second flight out was a replay of the first. Visibility was poor to none; we slow flew out of the mountains making sure we stayed over the creeks and rivers. It was a big relief to see the lights of the valley and at three in the morning we taxied on to my ramp. Jack was beyond nervous and took big breaths of air as he thanked me for bringing his son back safe.

He said, "Do you golf?" What do you tell Jack? I replied, "I'm just a hacker."

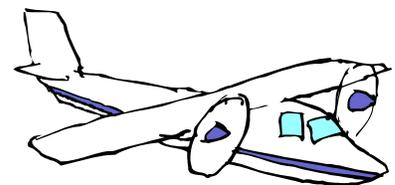
He gave me a big hand shake with a hundred dollar bill in it and said. "You practice up, when I'm in town next summer, we'll shoot a round."

His words, "we'll shoot a round," rolled in my mind for the next 6 months. Every free minute I had I was at the driving range hitting golf balls into submission. I could just imagine five thousand people watching me hack my way around a golf course.

I practiced, practiced, and practiced some more. (We'll shoot a round), made me swing harder. I swung the big dog, over and over. A pulled muscle in my ribs brought me to my senses. It's only a game, right?

Spring was in the air, but no word from Jack. Anxiety grew, the more I practiced the worse I got. For an instant I thought about not answering my phone until winter. Jack never came back to the valley. Thank God!

Two months after I flew him out of the wilderness, I received twenty one gift wrapped packages. They were his signature clubs, bag, balls and miscellaneous golf items. The entire card said, "For a job well done." Jack.



A Life in the Air

By Daniel Person, Chronicle Staff Writer, Originally appeared in the Bozeman Daily Chronicle June 16, 2011,
reprinted with permission

Golden eagles flying over the Wyoming prairie. An air show he went to when he was 10.

As a boy, these things captured Richard Roehm's imagination like nothing else. They made him want to fly.

"I was absolutely, totally fascinated with flight," he recalled while talking outside a private hangar at Gallatin Field this week.

Over the next half century, Roehm took that fascination and parlayed it into an Air Force career that saw more than 600 combat missions, a private hobby that saw countless hours in Montana's big sky, and now a rare honor for 50 years of safe flying.

Last week, Roehm received the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award, given out by the Federal Aviation Administration to pilots who can document 50 years of flying without an accident, a license revocation or infraction.

"I was just lucky," he said about his spotless flying record over five decades while standing with the Cessna he had most recently flown. "I was just lucky the old thing stayed in the air."

The award was presented to him, fittingly, during his last meeting sitting on the Gallatin Field Airport Authority Board - on which he served for 20 years as the airport saw explosive growth and became the second busiest in the state behind Billings.

Roehm got his foot in the aviation door by keeping his feet on the ground. While enrolled at Montana State University, he took a job with Jim Stradley, a crop duster. As Stradley sprayed from the air, Roehm would stand in the field, hoisting a pole in the air to help Stradley keep track of which row he needed to hit.

On Nov. 22, 1955, Roehm took off on his first solo flight in a Cessna 120 and never looked back.

After graduating from MSU with a degree in microbiology, Roehm joined the Air Force. Over the next 25 years, the United States would battle communism in Asia, sending Roehm in fighter planes over the thin strip of sea that separates China from Taiwan and a small nation called Vietnam.

He saw combat and got to know the feeling of machine gun rounds piercing his aircraft. During a rescue operation that resulted in a colleague receiving a Congressional Medal of Honor, more than 30 bullet holes riddled his A-1.

"Good machine," he now says of that model.

In later years, his combat experience would help him put civilian life into perspective. A Montana regent for seven years, Roehm was chairman of the board when John Mercer orchestrated what Roehm called a "coup" and took charge of the body. When a reporter later asked him if the experience was painful, he said no.

"What's painful is to lose close friends in combat, to see them blown up beside you. This was something that happens," he said.



Dick Roehm poses for a photo with the Cessna 182 he flew for many years. Roehm, a retired Air Force pilot was recently given the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award, which recognizes pilots who have demonstrated professionalism, skill and aviation expertise by maintaining safe operations for 50 or more years.

Along with the Board of Regents, Roehm also served on the county hospital board. But it was the airport board that saw his longest tenure.

Ted Mathis, who was director of the airport for most of Roehm's 20 years, outlined the challenge of overseeing an airport during a recent dinner honoring Roehm.

"Together, we've dealt with building projects and budgets, lawsuits and plane wrecks, ribbon cuttings and airline bankruptcies," Mathis said.

And after it all, he still gets excited about flight.

"I love to fly, I just do," he said. "I learned something every flight, up to the last one. It's a challenge to do right."

The "last one" came a few months ago, when his 75-year-old eyes - hampered by macular degeneration and glaucoma - finally grounded the Air Force colonel after 56 years in the air.

Without flight, what's next?

Again, Roehm put things in the terms of a fighter pilot.

"Off I go into the wild blue yonder," he said. "Every flight, you don't know what will happen."

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Montana Department of Transportation
2630 Airport Road
PO Box 200507
Helena, Montana 59620-0507

August 2011

Pre-Sort Standard
US Postage Paid
Helena, MT 59620
Permit No. 141



Wife of WWII Vet Takes Spin in Biplane Over Great Falls

By Daniel Johnson, originally posted at www.krtv.com on July 19, 2011, reprinted with permission

The wife of a World War II veteran took to the skies over Great Falls as part of the "Ageless Aviation Dreams" program.

June Baker, 92, has always been the first person to dive into a thrill-seeking adventure, and that's why signed up to ride in the front seat of a biplane.

June's husband, Robert Baker, was a WWII veteran whose ship was torpedoed. He was one of the first Montanan's to return home from war.

After nearly 60 years of marriage, Robert passed away and June moved to Great Falls.

Shortly after arriving, June was offered the unique opportunity.

Ageless Aviation Dreams is the organization that made this happen. Their goal is to give back to those who have given.

Darryl Fisher explained, "Giving them the opportunity to do something late in life that they otherwise wouldn't have the opportunity to do."

June took a 15 minute scenic ride over the Electric City and returned with literally her arms in the air and a huge smile on her face.

She said happily, "I'd spend the whole afternoon up here."

June said the flight was one of the greatest moments of her life and that her husband would be proud: "If he's looking down on us I know that he's really happy."

Visit www.agelessaviationdreams.org to learn more about the program.



June Baker in the biplane just before takeoff.

Notice

The Seeley Lake Airport 23S will be closed August 15, 2011 at 9 A.M. until further notice due to construction. Please check Notams.