



Montana and the Sky

Legendary Landing

By: John Harrington, *Independent Record*. Story initially appeared in *Helena IR* on September 29, re-printed with permission.



Pictured (l-r) Jean Baucus, Robert Morgan and Sara Hayter in front of Morgan's latest print "Amelia Earhart in Helena".

Some of Helena's golden memories took center stage at the Helena Regional Airport Tuesday September 28, when officials unveiled a painting commemorating the visit of Amelia Earhart to the Queen City, done by renowned local artist Robert Morgan.

Morgan's "Amelia Earhart in Helena" depicts the afternoon of Jan. 29, 1933, when Earhart and a Northwest Airways executive landed at the brand new airport before a crowd of hundreds after a seven-hour flight from Bismarck, N.D., in a Ford Trimotor passenger plane.

The painting was commissioned by Jeff and Jeannie Morrison, and hangs in the airport terminal next to another Morgan painting, one of Charles Lindbergh's 1927 visit to Helena.

Morrison's father, Red, founded Morrison Flying Service in 1931 and was the first manager of the Helena airport.

"Bob and I had talked about doing the project for quite a few years," Jeff Morrison said. "Last year we did the Lindbergh one and it turned out so well, we decided to go ahead."

Of the visits from Lindbergh and Earhart along with Cromwell Dixon's historic flight across the Continental Divide, Morrison said, "Those are probably three of the most exciting things that happened in this town at that particular time."

After landing in Helena, Earhart was feted at the Placer Hotel, where she was introduced by Gov. John Erickson and entertained the crowd with tales of her aviation exploits. Earhart spent the night at the home of Fred Sheriff, a local rancher and Helena airport commissioner as well as chairman of the State Aeronautics Board. Both Sheriff and Red Morrison are depicted in the Morgan painting, over Earhart's left shoulder.

Sheriff's daughter, Jean Baucus, recalled the night the famous aviator visited.

"They stayed at our house, and as they walked in she was dragging her mink coat on the ground, and I didn't know whether to pick it up or tell her or what," Baucus said. "She and my father sat around our dining room table and discussed the routes and the air service. She was charming, and I vividly remember the mink coat."

Jean Baucus wasn't the only Helenan at the airport Tuesday who was also there for Earhart's visit. For the man who created the painting, the day was more memorable for what wasn't seen.

"My father never missed a great occasion in Helena," Morgan said. "We drove up here and my dad bought each of us a pilot's helmet and goggles. I'll never forget it as long as I live. I got behind the tallest man in the United States and I couldn't see anything until your (Jean Baucus') father and Amelia Earhart came walking by.

"It was a great joy to put this together," he added.

The next day Earhart was off to Portland, Ore., and Seattle, seeking additional airports for possible Northwest Airways service.

Earhart disappeared four years later, somewhere in the Pacific Ocean, while attempting a record round-the-world flight.

Administrator's Column

Powder River MOA: As reported last month, the U.S. Air Force is seeking expansion to the current Powder River MOA located in southeast Montana. The proposal quadruples the size of the existing MOA with airspace sector restrictions from 500' AGL to FL600. The draft environmental impact statement is complete and can be viewed at: <http://www.ellsworth.af.mil/prtc.asp>. Public meetings are taking place beginning October 12 in Montana. A complete schedule of the meetings can also be found on the website. It is important to submit written comments even if attending a hearing and providing verbal testimony. You must send written comments to the U.S. Air Force and the FAA: U.S. Air Force comment form is available at <http://www.ellsworth.af.mil/prtc.asp> and are **due by November 13, 2010**. FAA comments are **due by November 30, 2010** - Manager, Operations Support Group, ATO Central Service Center, AJV-C2, Airspace Study 10-AGL-6NR, Attn: Michael Rizzo, AJV-C23, Department of Transportation, FAA, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Fort Worth TX 76137. Fax - 817-321-7744 or 817-321-7649.

Upcoming EAA Webinars: A Q&A session with aviation legend Kermit Weeks and a discussion on Flying the Marine One presidential helicopter are just two of the topics covered this fall through EAA Webinars, supported by Aircraft Spruce & Specialty Co. Participants are able to ask questions before and during each session. EAA Webinars are free to all aviation enthusiasts, but pre-registration is recommended due to space being limited to 1,000 registrants. Audio speakers or headphones are required to participate in the webinars, and a broadband Internet connection is recommended. The schedule of upcoming EAA Webinars and their registration links (all start at 7 p.m. Central time): Thursday, Oct. 14 – “The Zodiac CH 650,” Sebastien and Mathieu Heintz: www2.gotomeeting.com/register/851261890 and Tuesday, Oct. 19 – “Flying Marine One,” Lindy Kirkland: www2.gotomeeting.com/register/626

House Transportation Committee Looks at Residential Through-the-Fence: Earlier this month, the FAA proposed an amendment to the sponsor grant assurance Residential Through-the-Fence Policy which proposes to amend and clarify FAA policy and prohibits new residential through-the-fence access to a federally obligated airport. Lawmakers heard testimony from industry stakeholders on the impact of through-the-fence agreements and the road ahead. The newly issued FAA policy will allow for a more rational policy on permitting residential through-the-fence operations which allows current agreements to continue but does not allow for any future agreements which caused concern. Rep. Tom Petri (R-Wis), ranking member of the aviation subcommittee and Rep. Sam Graves (R-Mo), expressed concern about the policy's prohibition, saying the door should remain open to future agreements and the decisions made by the local community. The proposed policy is Docket No. FAA-2010-0831 and can be found at: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/pdf/2010-22095.pdf>. Comment on the proposed policy can be made through www.regulations.gov and are **due by October 25, 2010**.

Backcountry Airstrip Resolution Passes: Congressmen Denny Rehberg (MT-AL), Mike Simpson (ID-02), Allen Boyd (FL-02), Vernon Ehlers (MI-03), and Walt Minnick (ID-01) announced the passage of their resolution in the House of Representatives supporting recreational aviation and backcountry airstrips on America's public lands. The resolution recognizes the airstrips, which serve a vital role for emergency flight operations, fire-fighting, wildlife management, and tourism. The resolution “recognizes the value of recreational aviation and backcountry airstrips located on the Nation's public lands and commends aviators and the various private organizations that maintain these airstrips for public use.



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Calendar of Events

October 16, 2010 – AOM Meeting, MDT Aeronautics Division 10:00 a.m. For further information phone (406) 444-2506.

October 29, 2010 - Rocky Mountain College Aviation Program Open House, in Billings. Learn about getting your 4-year degree as a professional pilot or in Aviation Management. Contact Dan Hargrove at (406) 657-1060.

November 13, 2010 - Rocky Mountain College Aviation Program Open House, in Billings. Learn about getting your 4-year degree as a professional pilot or in Aviation Management. Contact Dan Hargrove at (406) 657-1060.

January 14 – 16, 2011 – Surratt Memorial Winter Survival Clinic. For further information phone (406) 444-2506.

February 11 – 13, 2011 – Flight Instructor Refresher Clinic. For further information phone (406) 444-2506.

March 3-5, 2011 – Montana Aviation Conference. Red Lion Colonial Hotel, Helena. For further information phone (406) 444-9580.

March 18, 2011 - Rocky Mountain College Aviation Program Open House, in Billings. Learn about getting your 4-year degree as a professional pilot or in Aviation Management. Contact Dan Hargrove at (406) 657-1060.

Bozeman gets Phoenix Service

Allegiant will provide nonstop jet service between Bozeman and Phoenix-Mesa beginning November 12. The company will introduce the new service to the Gallatin Valley with low introductory fares. The flights will operate twice weekly between **Gallatin Field Airport (BZN)** and **Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport (IWA)** with service **Monday** and **Friday**. Flights will depart Bozeman at **5:30 p.m.** arriving in Phoenix-Mesa at **7:55 p.m.** Flights leaving Phoenix-Mesa will depart at **2:40 p.m.** arriving in Bozeman at **4:50 p.m.** (local times). The company also offers nonstop service from Bozeman to Las Vegas.



Alke Serves on NASAO Executive Committee



The 2010 NASAO Executive Committee pictured at the Kansas Aviation Museum. Left to right are, Chairman, Vic Bird, Oklahoma, Joe Pestka, Treasurer from Missouri, Debbie Alke, Secretary from Montana and Randy Burdette, Vice Chairman, from Virginia. For the coming year Randy Burdette has been elected Chair, Mr. Pestka, Vice Chair, Ms. Alke, Treasurer and Mr. Bird remains on the Executive Committee as Immediate Past President. Tommy Booth, Mississippi, was elected to the Executive Committee as Secretary.

Pilots Train for Mountain Search

The Mountain Search Pilot Clinic was held in Helena September 10-12. The weekend consisted of helpful information for the participants by top notch instructors to help assist them when performing a search in the Mountains for downed aircraft.

This year's clinic had Ray Sanders, Hugh Wilkins, and Peter Graf as ELT Instructors, Skip Stoffel and Ryan Som as Survival Instructors from ERI (Emergency Response International, out of Cashmere, Washington), and Flight Instructors Art Dykstra, Tim Dwyer, Bill Werner, Rick Burger, Mike Campbell, and Jeanne MacPherson.

The clinic kicked off on September 10 with Jeanne giving a description of the Montana Air SAR Operations.

Art Dykstra from Missoula was the keynote speaker on Mountain Flying. He emphasized the importance of weather, aircraft performance and pilot proficiency to fly safely in mountainous terrain.

The second day everyone broke out into their workshops with a group of twelve participants going out for their flight lessons. The six flight instructors each took two participants out to their respective training locations. These locations consisted of Boulder, Canyon Ferry, Townsend.

That evening the group met back at the Red Lion Colonial hotel for the evening discussions. Jeanne discussed the Observer Program and Lewis & Clark County Sheriff Leo Dutton along with Lewis & Clark Search and Rescue Coordinator, Ralph DeCunzo gave a presentation on ground search and rescue.

The clinic wrapped up on September 12, with final break-out workshops and more flight lessons.

It was a wonderful weekend and enjoyed by all.



Jeanne MacPherson goes over SPOT Demo for pilots attending the course.



Instructor Mike Campbell of Dutton takes time off for a quick lunch before heading back for more Mountain Flight instruction.



Pilots received "hands on" instruction in the ELT course offered at the clinic.



Skip Stoffel, Survival Instructor offered great survival techniques for the participants.

New Public Use Airports

By: Jim Greil, Airports/Airways Bureau Chief

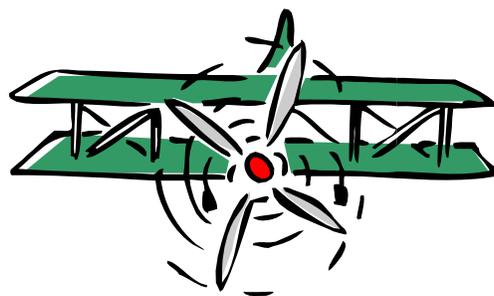


Runway 27, Knox Ridge Airport one of the six new Missouri River Breaks Airstrips.

recreational flying opportunities and airstrips throughout the nation. They have doggedly pursued and established great working relationships with various public and private entities to foster and assist the development and/or reopening of suitable recreational airports. The new airports that will be listed in the next edition of our Montana Airport Directory include the airports reopened to public use in close cooperation with the BLM and the Missouri Breaks Development Plan and another airstrip developed in cooperation with the USFS in the Little Belt Mountains. The names of the Missouri Breaks airstrips are Black Butte North, Bullwhacker, Cow Creek, Knox Ridge, Left Coulee and Woodhawk. The new Little Belts airstrip is called Russian Flats. All of these new airports have features, unique terrain and special circumstances that need to be seriously considered before any attempt at landing at them is to be made. Some have very limited runway lengths, high elevation, rough terrain and are subject to special weather considerations and other possible closures or hazards. Our airport directory, which will be available in January, will list in graphic and textual detail information regarding these strips, however, we would strongly suggest that you contact the RAF to get in touch with individuals who have traveled to these strips to get a first-hand account of them. These primitive strips vary largely in regards to the potentials difficulties they present, and it is imperative that potential users have both the appropriate aircraft and experience level before flying into them. We applaud the efforts of the RAF and all of the supporters and agencies who have worked so very hard to make these airstrips a reality. To get in touch with the RAF or to find out more about their organization and all of their projects, please log onto their website at: <http://www.recreationalaviationfoundation.org/>.

So often these days it is regularly reported that because of political, financial or dubious environmental concerns, we often read about airports closing or being threatened to be closed throughout the United States.

Montana has been fortunate that we have experienced only a few losses of public use airport facilities since the mass extinction of most of the airstrips that were swallowed up and closed after the creation of the Bob Marshall wilderness complex. So, it is with great excitement that I am pleased to report that over the course of this last year, 7 new airports have been added to the public use domain in Montana, bringing our total number to 126. These new airports were the direct result of the tireless efforts of several individuals and agencies, but especially the relatively new, but oh so successful Recreational Aviation Foundation (RAF). The RAF is a group of pilots and supporters that was organized a few years ago here in Montana and has grown into a national organization that focuses attention to the enjoyment, promotion and development of



CAP looking for World War II-Era Members

Civil Air Patrol is looking for members who served the organization during World War II, Dec. 7, 1941, through Aug. 15, 1945, who were at least 18 years old during at least part of that service. This search has been prompted by legislation pending in both houses of Congress that, if passed, would award a single Congressional Gold Medal to CAP for the service of its members during World War II.

This search encompasses those who are living but not currently active in CAP, as well as deceased members. Substantiation of CAP service may be requested.

Names, with contact information, or, in the case of deceased members, names along with the name of a close relative or friend and their contact information, should be sent to: Civil Air Patrol Public Affairs, 105 S. Hansell St., Maxwell AFB, AL 36112.

Alternatively, e-mails can be addressed to paa@capnhq.gov.

The Mann Gulch Fire

By: John Bader

While I was attending Montana State College (now Montana State University) I spent several summers working for the Montana Aeronautics Commission. Dale Fearn, the brother of my good friend Bill Fearn, was the assistant director of the commission and he offered Bill a summer job painting Civil Aeronautics Administration-approved markers on roof tops in the state. Because the job required two people Bill asked me if I would like to join him and I snapped it up right away. However, because of the potential problem of nepotism, Bill didn't get the job and Bob Mercer was hired in his place.

The need for such markers became apparent because after WWII many people had started flying their own planes and this was especially true in Montana with great wide-open spaces between towns and airports. At that time, Montana had the most private pilots, per capita, of all the states. Men who had flown during the war were becoming plane owners and it was deemed necessary to put up "road markers," so pilots could keep track of their location and find places to land, in case of emergencies. The program was administered by the CAA but each state was required to do the work, following their guidelines.

It was, no doubt, the best job I ever had. Bob and I went to Helena when school was over and got busy assembling the equipment we would need to accomplish the summer's work. We were to use my car, a 1940 Pontiac sedan, to pull a state-owned trailer containing all the equipment we would need. This included a gas-engine-powered generator, a portable compressor, several 50- and 100- foot lengths of electric cord, ladders, an array of spray equipment for applying the paint, gas and oil for the generator, several 5-gallon cans of special yellow high-gloss paint for the markers and some flat-black paint to outline the yellow characters, if necessary. This assembly took a couple of weeks and while we were doing that we stayed at the Helena airport in the shop of a local plane mechanic. We slept on cots that we would also take with us, in case we were far away from any lodging facilities while traveling throughout the state.

A list of places we were to erect the markers had been prepared in advance and we finally hit the road and started marking the state. In case of problems we were to call the office in Helena and the director, Frank Wiley or Dale would come to our assistance. Because we couldn't haul enough paint for the whole summer they would use the commission's plane to supply us as needed and also bring us our mail or spare parts, etc. After a few markers had been finished we quickly learned the best and quickest way to do the job and began to really cover the state.

On August 5, 1949, we had been marking towns west of Helena and were finishing up that part of the trip in Lincoln, prior to going back to Helena to replenish our supplies. As we were heading toward the Missouri River we noticed a column of smoke in the distance and stopped at the first farmhouse we came to and called the Forest Service. We were told that the fire had already been reported so we went on to town.

As it turned out, that was one of a series of fires that had been started by lightning but at the time it wasn't considered to be a very serious one. However, that was about to change. By the time we got to Helena we discovered that it had spread into a steep canyon named Mann Gulch. Smokejumpers had been dispatched to fight it and 13 of them perished in the flames. The news media got interested in it and began to descend on Helena, rent planes and fly over the fire to get pictures and stories. This presented a serious hazard so Frank stopped all air traffic in that area. He told the media that he would fly over the fire to get pictures and make them available to anyone interested. He had anticipated such an occasion years before and equipped the commission's plane, a Stinson "station wagon", with a surplus Navy camera with a 6-inch lens that he mounted in a hole in the floor in front of one of the back seats in the plane. He had it rigged so it could also be operated from the front seats. He also had a big hand-held camera that he could use to take pictures from the open window on the passenger side of the plane. Because Dale was busy dealing with the media and Federal- and State-Government agencies, he wasn't available to fly the plane. I had enough hours in the air so I was chosen to fly it over Mann Gulch while he took the pictures.

We took a number of pictures from several angles around the fire and decided to make one last pass, this time straight up the gulch to get some good vertical shots. He told me to keep as low as reasonably possible and started taking shots. As we progressed, he kept telling me to get lower. I was almost in a nose-down dive angle but the heat from the fire pushed us up 800 feet higher. He commented that this was the first time he ever gained 800 feet in a dive. Finally we flew over the ridge and away from the fire and the plane shot downward in the cool air. We flew back to the airport, inspected the plane after we landed and discovered that the dope on the underside of the wings, elevators and fuselage had been blistered by the heat.

An interesting sidelight to this story is that the person who reported that fire prior to our call to the Forest Service on August 5, 1949, was to become our next-door neighbor in Wilton, California some 40 years later. He is Joe Warnes, who was a student in Ohio in 1949 and that summer he was working in Montana for the Forest Service as a fire lookout.

Dale and I flew to Missoula a few days later to get details about the fire from the Johnson Flying Service, who had flown the smokejumpers to the fire. There we discovered that the charred remains of the 13 firefighters had been laid out in one of the hangers and family members and acquaintances were trying to identify them from jewelry or any other identifiable objects. It was a sight I will never forget.

EAA Chapter 1122 Exceeds Young Eagles Flights Season Goal

Northwest Montana was graced Saturday, October 2 with clear, warm skies as Polson's EAA Chapter 1122 hosted enough Young Eagles to exceed their 2010 goal of 100 flights by a baker's dozen. The season's highest volume day was July 23, when 66 Young Eagles flew out of 2,600-foot long St. Ignatius at the base of the beautiful Mission Mountains.

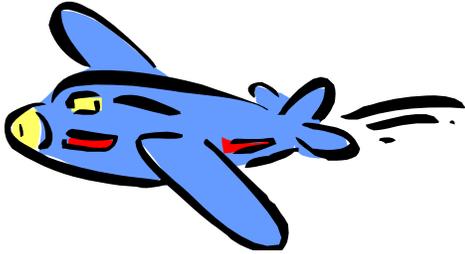
Eleven Chapter 1122 pilots shared this summer's flying, and Chapter president Mauri Morin said, "We had a great season. We saw a lot of new faces and as in the past, a few repeats, with their EAA complimentary logbooks in hand."

Saturday's flights included aerial views of spectacular Flathead Lake, Kerr Dam and Buffalo Rapids on the Flathead River. Mission Valley area Young Eagle flights are coordinated by Bud Radtke, (406) 883-1245.

To learn more about EAA see: www.eaa.org



Polson pilot Carmine Mowbray orients three Young Eagles before taking off for their free local flight in her Cessna 182.



GA Fatalities Decrease

Preliminary figures released by the National Transportation Safety Board this month show aviation deaths decreased from 574 in 2008 to 538 in 2009. Nearly 90% of aviation fatalities occurred in general aviation accidents (471), but they still represented a decrease from the previous year (494).

AOPA Foundation Launches Online Auction

As part of the Night For Flight benefit dinner to be held during the AOPA Aviation Summit, the AOPA Foundation, charitable arm of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, has launched an online auction. Bidding is now underway and will continue until Saturday, Nov. 13.

"Every item up for bid has been donated, and we are most grateful to every donor," said Bruce Landsberg, president of the AOPA Foundation. "Their generosity and the interest their donations will generate will provide important support for the foundation's four strategic initiatives: preserving airports; growing the pilot population; promoting safety education; and enhancing the image of general aviation."

The biggest-ticket item up for auction is a WACO Classic YMF-5D aircraft. The YMF-5D is a brand new made-to-order aircraft from the WACO Classic Aircraft Corporation. It is an open-cockpit biplane design that offers pilots a happy marriage of barnstorming-era wind-in-your-hair fun with the latest IFR-capable avionics. The aircraft being auctioned is still being built, so the winning bidder will have the opportunity to work directly with Waco Classic Aircraft to further customize the avionics package and other options.

For the adventurous, there's a chance to be the winning bidder for a day at Tutima Academy flying with air show legend Sean D. Tucker. Or bid for an opportunity to crew for air show performer Mike Goulian.

Also on the auction block are an accelerated 10-day instrument training course, numerous vacation opportunities, even the chance to name a character in an upcoming novel by author Stuart Wood.

Other items include flight bags donated by Brightline, David Clark headsets, iPads, and a Sporty's SP-400 handheld Nav/Com radio with full ILS display, to name a few.

A portion of each ticket to the Night For Flight benefit dinner and the proceeds from the auction will go to the AOPA Foundation to fund the initiatives to preserve the future of general aviation.

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Exec Air Montana Joins Avfuel Network

Exec Air Montana, an FBO at Helena Regional Airport (HLN) in Montana, is now an Avfuel-branded dealer, offering AVTRIP points and the Avfuel and Cessna Contract Fuel programs to qualifying customers.

“Exec Air Montana leadership and staff clearly see their work in general aviation as a way of life – and one they love. It’s just one of many reasons that the FBO excels,” said Avfuel Director of Market Marci Ammerman. “Exec Air Montana’s enthusiasm for aviation sets them apart from other FBOs out there, and that’s why Avfuel is proud to be allied with this longtime aviation company.”

Recently renovated, Exec Air Montana has a large ramp capable of handling aircraft up to military C-5As, and boasts 42,000 square feet of heated hangar space. All standard services are available for aircraft and crew.

The FBO’s beginnings were in 1931 as Morrison Flying Service. Current co-owners Dan Norhton and John Maxness purchased the FBO in 1995.

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