

The Cleco

Official Publication of the Experimental Aircraft Association
EAA Chapter #393 POBox 272725 Concord, CA 94527-2725

AUGUST 1999

REGULAR MEETING AUGUST 25, 1999

Vice President Scott Achelis invites us to the August meeting with the following:

On May 4th, the Contra Costa Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a resolution proposed by Representative Mark DeSaulnier, directing various County agencies to prepare an economic impact analysis of CCR by an independent consultant. Among other things, one focus of the report is to "investigate and formulate new noise mitigation measures and programs" to be presented to the board. The resolution "further directs the Airport Manager to initiate changes, with input for the Aviation Advisory Committee and the public, in the airport noise complaint system, ensuring that impacted residents are given feedback as to the handling of their complaints and that pilots are officially notified and disciplined where appropriate". (emphasis by Cleco editor)

Our speaker this month will be **Brian Horne**, who reports directly to the Airport Manager Daved Mendes on noise and other environmental concerns surrounding CCR. He will review with us the current noise abatement requirements, and provide insight on future of noise restrictions pilots may face when they operate in and around CCR. Join us Wednesday, August 25 at 7:30 PM in the old Terminal Building just south of the Tower, for what promises to be an interesting, informative, and lively discussion

concerning the future use of our airport!

Please wear your Badges during the picnic so that newcomers will feel more comfortable coming up to talk to you. You should also approach them! Make them feel welcome!

PRESIDENT'S CORNER August 1999

Bruce Seguire has brought to my attention another challenge to our interests as pilots, builders and aircraft owners at Buchanan Field. A small group of local residents has persuaded the Board of Supervisors to begin an economic impact analysis of Buchanan Field Airport, to direct the Airport Manager to work with the Airport Subcommittee of the Board to formulate new noise mitigation measures, and to initiate changes in the airport noise complaint system ensuring that impacted residents are given feedback as to the handling of their complaints, and that pilots are officially notified and disciplined where appropriate. (Emphasis mine) The Board action also requests that all existing leases including our hangers be reviewed. (Among other things, the Board is apparently concerned about its legal liability if tenants or subtenants cause damage) The Board of Supervisors took this action on May 4, 1999 without input from any one in the aviation community.

There are two important meetings coming up shortly in the Airport Administrator's Office on the West Side. It is important that as many of us as possible show up at these meetings so that our

interests are protected and not jeopardized by a small group of residents. The meetings are:

1. Aviation Advisory Committee Meeting, Tuesday August 17, 1999 at 7:30 PM in the Airport Administrator's Office.
2. Airport Subcommittee meeting (of the Board of Supervisors) on Wednesday, August 25, 1999 at 3:00 PM in the Airport Administrator's Office.

As owners and pilots, we seem to be in a recurring conflict with the general public and with local residents who are concerned with the expense to the public of maintaining the airport and with noise and safety issues. There are more of them than there are of us owners and pilots, so it is important that we attend these meetings and protect our interests. I encourage every single EAA Member to take the time to attend these meetings.

Let's keep flying at Buchanan!

Ron

SATURDAY BARBECUE BRUCE SEGUINE'S HANGER! OCTOBER 9

Bruce Seguire and Pete Wiebens are serving us a barbecue on Saturday, October 9, 1999 at 11:30 AM at Bruce's hanger (Northwest Hanger # C-13. Come! Enjoy! More details in the September Cleco

Presidents Corner - July 1999

(With apologies from the editor for failing to get this in the July Cleco)

A very special thanks to all those Chapter members who helped the EAA static display come together and make the "Buchanan Open House" a success.

Our usual Chapter "fly-out" was the 1st Saturday following our Wednesday meeting. It was a pretty June 26 and scheduled to be "HOT" in the inland

Valleys so we decided on Half Moon Bay to get relief from the heat. It was a short 20-minute flight for most of us. The day was bright and clear and the view over San Francisco and the Golden Gate was spectacular, as usual! There were 5 airplanes and 15 people including 3 members who were able to fill some empty seats we had. Those making the flight were Fred & Vi Egli and Bob & Sandy Decker arriving in Fred's beautiful Lancair IV; Bob & Sally Belshe in their pretty yellow Lancair 235-320; Tony Tiritilli & Linda in their Cherokee 235 with Rob Hadley & Richard Bolton filling the extra seats; Harvard & Sara Holmes in their pretty Mooney with Bruce Hobbs occupying an extra seat and Ron & Judy Robinson in their Glasair IRG. We all enjoyed a nice lunch and each other's company at the new Mezza Luna Restaurant in Princeton, a short walk south of the airport.

Fly Safely,
Ron

PARIS AIR SHOW REPORT FROM SCOTT ACHELIS

I had the good fortune to be able to attend the Paris Air Show, held each June at Le Bourget Airport, just south west of the more familiar Charles du Gualle Airport. The trip was arranged by a travel agency specializing in "tours" for active and retired airline personnel (think "pilots"). Our group of 21 had high expectations of the most famous airshow in the world, and adding to that excitement was the talk-of-the-town following the spectacular "bail-out" of the Russian MIG pilot who's plane scraped the runway after performing a series of loops before the crowd a day prior to our arrival.

To understand the Paris Airshow, one needs to understand that the event is primarily a convention and sales event, a point dramatically brought home as we arrived via city bus. Virtually all of the other attendees traveled by chauffeured black Mercedes. Anyone not aware of our means of transportation could easily spot us by our clothing ... as we were dressed in California!

Oshkosh airshow attire: shorts, T-shirt, comfortable walking shoes, and baseball caps adorning our heads for shade. The dress-of-the-day was either full dress uniform (if military), or coat and tie for the men and short black skirts for the women. The displays were different too: Where else can you go and scope out the latest tank-killing technology remotely deployed by pilotless aircraft... or see full mock-up displays of hellfire missiles, with detailed operation and parts all labeled in French?

But the airshow, that's what we came to see, right? There too things are different. While it was interesting to see an Airbus transport specially modified to carry cargo perform departure stalls, with the subsequent wing drop and recovery (think of Flipper 100 times bigger), for the most part the air show is a flying display of aircraft. There was very little aerobatics flying, and no formation work at all (where's the "French Connection" I've seen at Oshkosh?).

In summation, the Paris Airshow is a celebration of aviation, but most of all is a trade show of 200 aircraft on display from around the world (50 of which are scheduled to fly at sometime during the week). There are over 286,000 visitors who attend over the course of the week and 1,860 exhibitors from 46 countries. But to an outside visitor, even an aviation enthusiast, the actual airshow is more-or-less humdrum.

AVGAS FOR YOUNG EAGLE PILOTS

EAA 393's Young Eagle coordinator Lisle Knight pulled off another successful "Post Open House" event on Saturday, July 10th with pilots Scott Achelis, Bob Belshe, Fred Egli, Bob Decker, Pete Wiebens, Phil Jenkins and Tony Tiritilli assisting with the planes and flights. 26 Young Eagles were given flights. Ground personnel consisted of Ron Robinson, Lisle Knight, Don O'Neil, and Tracy Peters. On the picnic day, July 17, Bob Belshe, Lou Ellis, Bob Decker and Phil Jenkins gave 4 more Young Eagles a thrill.

Please remember that Navajo Aviation, the Concord Chamber of Commerce and Chevron Oil are once again donating 100 LL to those pilots who

both displayed their planes at the Open House, and subsequently flew/ fly Young Eagles. If you displayed your A/C, but were unable to attend the Y/E event, then plan to fly some Y/E before the end of the month (the more Y/E's you fly, the more of the fuel you get!!)

PICNIC REPORT & OTHER ITEMS FROM LOUIS GOODELL

We had a pretty good turn out. Bruce Sequine and Pete Wiebens were our Chief cooks and Hosts. Also there was Ice cream, from Bruce Hobbs. The hot dogs were big and hard to keep in bun, but were good. So were the hamburgers..

We had a new banner (Young Eagles) and a new shade cover, which worked great. Louie's grand daughter and her Parents set up shade cover. She became a Young Eagle two weeks before and again at the picnic for helping to set up for the picnic. We have two new members in our chapter, Aaron Speer in June and Dennis R. Byron signed up at the picnic. Dennis flies a BE23 - Musketeer.

The Christmas Party will be Saturday December 11, 1999 More details at our next meeting.

Treasurers report:

Savings \$ 2,593.29

Checking \$1140.70

ONE DAY AT OSHKOSH

I spent a hot Thursday at Oshkosh. It had been four years since I last attended. I ran in to Bob Belshe who was manning the Golden West booth.

I ran into Bob Hasson (the Tucson EAA President that I interviewed in January) at the adjacent Copper State Booth. Hasson has apparently accepted the fact that Golden West is here to stay and said: "It's just competition." I saw Fred Egli's Lancair IV, but did not see Fred.

The Zoche Diesel was again there, still wonderful, and still not available. I saw nobody plugging the Ford V-6 or the Chevrolet V-6 this year, unlike 1995, but there were several suppliers and users of the Subaru engine. The Rotary Air Force uses

Subaru's in their Gyroplane. There was also a Vertical Takeoff canard type plane with four Subaru engines, one on each wing tip. The engines could rotate to horizontal after lift off. I saw the new Tango quick build composite kit which may provide strong competition to Van's RV-6A. Van's quick build kit had such excellent workmanship that I was tempted to sell my plane and start over. I saw three or four planes with Mazda rotary engines with very slim aerodynamic cowls.

I attended a forum conducted by Don Bouchard, who is called the Subaru Guru, from College Station, Texas. He has had ten years experience, is knowledgeable about the engine and was very enthusiastic about its reliability. He told of ways to use the stock fuel injection and electronic ignition, and of ways to use carbs and mags.

For me, the high point of Oshkosh was seeing the dozen or so 1929 style Pietenpol Air Campers, four of them with Model A Ford engines. I have wanted to build one of those ever since 1936.

I spent some time talking to Roger Hansen of San Ramon who keeps his excellent RV-6 at Livermore. He was very honest about the performance of his plane, which had an IO-360 with a constant speed prop. He verified my suspicion that some builders exaggerate the alleged speed of their planes.

I attended a forum conducted by a German woman, Sonja Englert, an aeronautical engineer. She modifies stock planes like Mooneys to increase their speeds. She said that 30 to 40% of a plane's drag is in the baffling and cooling. An airtight baffling is critical to good speed, but she did not think a special plenum was necessary. She is able to get a 10% increase in Mooney speed by reducing the size and placement of the cooling air intake holes so that the air inlet is 1/2 the area of the outlet over the front cylinders. The bottom of the inside opening should hit the top 1/3 of the front cylinders and the four sides should angle in at 7 degrees toward the rear outlet. She urged us to experiment with foam and duct tape on our planes.

As compared with 1995, the food was much better. There was an immense variety of available fast food including several Macdonald's.

LET'S HELP BOB BELSHE AT GOLDEN WEST

Bob Belshe is really putting out for Golden West. He is a Director, Newsletter Editor, and Chairman of Airplane Registration for the upcoming Golden West Fly in on September 10, 11 & 12. Bob could use our help. He needs about 30 volunteers each of whom is willing to put in a 4-hour shift registering planes as they arrive. The shifts are from 6 to 10 AM, 10AM to 2PM and then a four-hour shift after the air show. He could use 6 to 8 volunteers on each shift. I propose that Chapter 393 and each of its members volunteer to help Bob. The job involves not only registering, but also collecting the admission fee from each pilot.

One Way to Improve your Glide Ratio

By

Bill Madden

Over the 4th of July weekend, my wife and I were invited up to Donner Lake to spend the weekend at a friend's cabin. Anticipating the Holiday Weekend Traffic that all the ground huggers would be facing on Interstate 80, we gleefully packed up the plane on Friday afternoon and headed for the Truckee Airport. It was a beautiful afternoon for a flight. The sky was clear, the air was smooth, and we had a slight tailwind to help push us along. An occasional glance downward at the gridlock on I-80 just heightened our euphoria. Our plane is a KIS TR-1; call sign N91321. For those of you unfamiliar with the model, it's a low winged two-seater that does about 160mph. The recommended powerplant is a Continental IO-240 driving a wooden Sensenich Propeller. That's what we use.

Like I said, it was a beautiful afternoon for a flight. We flew around Sacramento Airspace to Auburn and then followed I-80 towards Truckee. I crested the ridge at Donner Pass at about 9500'. Since I now had the Truckee Airport in sight, I

tuned in the CTAF and listened to the Truckee traffic. There was quite a bit of it - as you can imagine, Donner Lake is a pretty popular place to spend the 4th of July Weekend. Most folks were using runway 19, except for a couple of Gulfstreams who were using the longer 10.

I had set the plane up for a descent and was beginning to run through the approach in my mind - when I heard a pronounced 'THUMP' from the front of the plane. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw a blurry object go flying over my left wing. My first thought was that I'd had a bird strike, so I immediately pulled back the throttle in case my prop was damaged - I'd heard plenty of horror stories about the vibrations which can result from a severely unbalanced prop. (The unlikelihood of hitting a bird at 9500' did not actually occur to me until much later in the day.) The vibrations didn't materialize, but something had definitely changed. A look out the front of the plane revealed that the 'big round blur' was no longer leading the plane. Somewhere in here, Karen (my wife) asked 'What happened?' After a few seconds, I replied, "I think we lost our prop."

Fortunately, Karen kept her cool, which helped me keep mine. Her next question was calm and rational, "Okay, what do we do?" We've all gone through the procedure for losing an engine plenty of times, so I started going through mine. There was no point in trying to restart the engine, (it was running just fine!) so I skipped those steps. I set up a glide speed of 100mph and got on the radio. I announced our position, our altitude, our problem and our intention - which was to make it to a bare area on the other side of Lake Donner and land the plane there. I didn't think there was any way we'd make the airport. I had done dead stick tests in the plane before, and, holding a glide of 100mph, it sinks at about 1000'/min. We were 8 miles out and 3600' above the airport - you do the math.

We reached the bare spot I had been aiming for and I began planning how to do it. I wanted to make sure I was landing into the wind, which wasn't much, but every little bit helps. Before I started my turn, Karen piped in again "Are you

SURE we can't make the airport?" I took another look. It WAS a lot closer. We were on a heading of 60 degrees, and runway 10 was like a long finger beckoning us in. Like any good navigator, Karen had the GPS out. We were now 4 miles out and 1400' above grade. I decided to listen.

"Okay," I announced over the radio, "We've had a change of plans and we're going to try for the airport." One of the bigger factors in this decision was the golf course I saw between us and the airport. I knew that if I didn't make the airport, I could at least make the golf course. The guy working the UNICOM (who was being very helpful) gave me the winds and the active runway - 19. "I'm just gonna try for 10" was my reply. From there, it was all up to the plane.

Surprisingly, it made it to the runway with plenty of room to spare. We landed the plane and still had enough momentum to glide off the runway onto a taxiway and let the airport continue its business. One of the emergency vehicles gave us a tow to a parking spot and the incident was over. By the time our friends showed up to give us a ride to the cabin, the excitement was all over and they didn't have a clue what had happened. Unfortunately, I had to tell them the story, since we now needed a ride back to Concord. (On the Interstate, of course - how humiliating!)

In hindsight, it's pretty obvious that the plane's glide ratio was substantially improved by the total loss of the prop. The dead stick testing I had done previously was with that big wooden stick out in front catching the wind. If we had lost the engine, rather than the prop, we'd have probably landed in that field just East of Lake Donner. I went over to take a look at that field and that would have been a VERY rough landing! As it is, I have a new prop on the plane and it's back in my hangar on the East Ramp.

Now for the moral of the story - Why did the prop come off? Well, the prop bolts sheared. There are six 3/8" bolts which hold the prop onto the prop extension. All six bolts were sheared. I had torque'd these bolts only 3 months previous to the incident; but, apparently, this is too long. Based on this incident, and a couple of other

incidents like this one, Sensenich has issued new instructions for the operation of their wooden propellers. These new instructions call for more frequent torque checks of prop bolts – particularly on new propellers. If you have a wooden prop, I suggest you get a copy of their new instructions. More importantly, I suggest you check the torque on your prop bolts. I'll certainly be checking mine!

Could Some 393 Member Please Become a Designated Airworthiness Representative?

Much of our trouble with insurance coverage could be solved by prompt and definite written responses from the FAA. The qualifications are set forth in FAA Advisory Circular 183-33A, which I obtained from Guy Minor of FAA. The required qualifications are rigorous:

- Current and thorough working knowledge of the FAR's and related material
- Current technical knowledge and experience
- Unquestionable integrity, cooperative attitude, and the ability to exercise sound judgment
- The ability to maintain the highest degree of objectivity
- At least two years of satisfactory experience in working directly with the FAA in connection with the type of work an DAR does
- Five years of experience as an FAA manufacturing inspector having responsibility for managing programs leading to the issuance of original airworthiness certificates
- A current mechanic certificate with airframe and powerplant ratings.

The above requirements are paraphrased somewhat.

Guy Minor seemed well aware of our insurance-FAA problem and I sensed that FAA is trying to speed up to meet our impatient requests to be able to fly with certain insurance coverage after we make a "modification." The FAA has many other responsibilities with limited budget and personnel.

Guy said that FAA was very cautious about appointing new DAR's, but he encouraged the

most qualified among us to send in applications with as much justification as we could muster.

A TYPICAL EXAMPLE OF THE NEED FOR A DAR

Wishing to take every necessary step to make sure that my Avemco Insurance covered me, I notified FAA by fax on Friday, August 6 that I was re-installing my Warnke propeller after it had been shortened 2 inches and slightly re-carved by Margie Warnke. I stated my opinion, and that of my Technical Counselor and of my Flight Advisor, that this modification to my prop was not substantial. Jennifer A. Adair, FAA Aviation Safety Inspector phoned me that same day stating that she would act as promptly as possible. Ms. Adair requested paper work on my prop from Margie Warnke as to the changes made and whether or not Margie Warnke had balanced the prop, and Ms. Adair inspected my new prop in my hanger on Tuesday, August 10. I received m OK from FAA in the mail on Friday August 13. Ms Adair was very competent, efficient, and professional. By FAA standards, this was terrific service by a public servant, and I agree. By the impatient standards of EAA builders, it is a difficult week to wait before flying insured after each "modification." After all, we are experimental, and we are constantly experimenting.

SHOP TIP ?

I devised a way to remove the old thread bushings in my Lycoming crankshaft prop flange without driving them out and possibly bending or damaging the flange. I got a 1-inch pipe cap and hacksawed it off so that the cap was only 7/8" long. I placed that over the "head" of the bushing and used a large C clamp to push them back and out toward the engine. Very light tapping assisted this process. To install the new ones, I lubricated them and used a hardware bolt through a pipe nipple to pull them in place. This is a cowboy solution but it worked. I called an engine re-builder and found that they drive them out with a

bolt and hammer. My way is better than that, at least.

CALENDAR

August 25 Regular 393 Meeting
September 10, 11, 12 Golden West
September 16-19 Reno Air Races
October 9 EAA 393 Barbecue
October 7-10 Copperstate
October 27 Regular 393 Meeting
December 11 EAA 393 Christmas Party

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

For Sale Cessna 152. 4990 TT. 90 SMOH. 90 since Prop overhaul. Cessna avionics + DME. \$26,900. John Cicero 925-370-1237

Help Wanted... For Pay Yet!

J. R. Gibb wants someone to install (or to help him install) a smooth belly mod on his M20F Mooney located in Hanger A-2 East Ramp. Mod will use DZUS Fasteners and layout. Work can be done days, nights or weekends and will take about 60 hours. Cash for labor! 925-684-9612

For Sale: 50% completed Tri-cycle Glastar; wings closed and mounted on fuselage. Inspected twice by Technical Counselor, Rick Lambert. Good workmanship. No engine. Current kit price plus \$6,000 obo. Located in Walnut Creek. Call Rick Lambert for further details at 925-934-5007 or at work, 925-676-9377

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

Submissions may be **e-mailed**, hand written, typed, or on any IBM diskette (in ASCII or MS Word). The deadline for submissions to the editor is the 14th of every month (newsletter is produced and mailed by the 17th). The editor's address is: 400 Arbol Via Walnut Creek CA 94598
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JOKE ? DEPARTMENT

Ten Dollars

Stumpy and his wife Martha went to the state fair every year. Every year Stumpy would say, "Martha, I'd like to ride in that there airplane. And every year Martha would say, "I know Stumpy, but that airplane ride costs ten dollars, and ten dollars is ten dollars." Stumpy said, "Martha, I am 70 years old. If I don't ride that airplane this year I may never get the chance." Martha replied, "The ride costs ten dollars, and ten dollars is ten dollars."

The pilot overheard them and said, "Folks, I'll make you a deal. I'll take you both up for a ride. If you can stay quiet for the entire ride and not say one word, I won't charge you. But if you say one word it's ten dollars." Stumpy and Martha agreed and up they went. The pilot does all kinds of stunts, but not a word is heard. He does all kind of twists and turns, rolls and dives. They land and the pilot said "By golly, I did everything I could think of to get you to talk. Stumpy replied, "Well, I was gonna say something when Martha fell out, but ten dollars is ten dollars."

The Genie

A man was walking along a California beach and stumbled across an old lamp. He picked it up and rubbed it and out popped a genie. The genie said "OK, OK. You released me from the lamp, blah,blah, blah. This is the fourth time this month and I'm getting a little sick of these wishes so you can forget about three. You only get one wish!" The man sat and thought about it for a while and said, "I've always wanted to go to Hawaii but I'm scared to fly and I get very seasick. Could you build me a bridge to Hawaii so I can drive over there to visit?" The genie laughed and said, "That's impossible. Think of the logistics of that! How would the supports ever reach the bottom of the Pacific? Think of how much concrete... how much steel!! No, think of another wish."

The man said OK and tried to think of a really good wish.

Finally, he said, "I've been married and divorced four times. My wives always said that I don't care and that I'm insensitive. So, I wish that I could understand women...know how they feel inside and what they're thinking when they give me the silent treatment...know why they are crying, know what they really want when they say 'nothing'...know how to make them truly happy...." The genie's reply: "You want that bridge two lanes or four?"

Life and Cookies

An elderly man lay dying in his bed. In death's agony, he suddenly smelled the aroma of his favorite chocolate chip cookies wafting up the stairs. He gathered his remaining strength, and lifted himself from the bed. Leaning against the wall, he slowly made his way out of the bedroom, and with even greater effort forced himself down the stairs, gripping the railing with both hands. With labored breath, he leaned against the doorframe, gazing into the kitchen. Were it not for death's agony, he would have thought himself already in heaven: there, spread out upon newspapers on the kitchen table were literally hundreds of his favorite chocolate chip cookies. Was it heaven? Or was it one final act of heroic love from his devoted wife, seeing to it that he left this world a happy man?

Mustering one great final effort, he threw himself toward the table, landing on his knees in a rumped posture. His parched lips parted; the wondrous taste of the cookie was already in his mouth; seemingly bringing him back to life. The aged and withered hand shakingly made its way to a cookie at the edge of the table, when his wife suddenly smacked it with a spatula. "Stay out of those," she said, "they're for the funeral."

Viagra

Rick Lambert tells me that a truckload of Viagra was recently hi-jacked. Shortly thereafter, he monitored a police broadcast and overheard: "Be on the look-out for two hardened criminals driving a stolen truck."

The Following Tale is Borrowed From The Flying Wire, EAA Chapter 29's Newsletter

View From the Co-Pilot or...

by Randy Parent

VP Chapter 29
EAA



Your VP has returned from the Iditarod. Thank you Mr. Editor for covering for me. The Iditarod was a great trip. This year, Larry Olson, made the trip and spent one week working the Iditarod. When you see Larry ask him about his first over night on the trail at -30F.

The best part for me is the flying and working with the dogs (mushers). When I grow up I want to be an Iditarod Air Force pilot and learn how to fly a real 180..on skis and mush dogs. Most of my time, during the three weeks in Alaska, was spent on the Iditarod trail. I was assigned to two check points, Finger Lake (POP 8) and a small town called Safety (POP 1, the bar tender). Safety is about 22 miles from Nome and is the last check point before Nome, the finish line. My job this year was to check the mushers in at the check points and to inspect

their sleds for the required safety items that the musher must carry during the race.

One thing is certain, the annual Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race is a supreme test for dogs, mushers, volunteers and the pilots and airplanes that fly in support of the race. The trail is over 1,100 miles long, from Anchorage to Nome with 22+ check points and many off airport landing areas. Nobody makes it up the trail alone. I was one of 1,800 volunteers that are needed to stage what has become one of the most grueling sporting events of all time. The Iditarod is called the Last Great Race. Volunteers help with communications, transportation, emergencies and logistics of everything from delivering dog food to keeping track of the mushers and volunteers on the trail.

This year I was able to fly six legs up front with the

Iditarod Air Force as a passenger. My first flight was from Anchorage to Finger Lake. The departure off the snow covered lake was no big deal for pilot Frank Everett. His C-172 with the big engine pulled pitch coming off the ice like a Hughes 500. But when we got out to my first check point my eyes were rolling and I was thinking about how nice it would be to have a collective in my left hand (or a J-3 with VG). There was no place for an airplane to land and we were heavy with two passengers and lots of gear. Frank was doing what every good helicopter pilot does, a high reconnaissance. Next thing I know we are down on the lake "rolling out" over the ice. Frank made landing off site on snow and ice look easy.

I spent the next week at the Finger Lake check point. The ground crew consisted of four vets, two checkers, two dog handlers, one race marshal and two communication persons. We spent the first day setting up tents, cutting wood and preparing for the mushers that would be arriving within two days. Oh yes, our only heat was a small portable wood stove. The stove did ok if you stocked it up each hour. Unfortunately, our team was so preoccupied with the mushers that by the time we hit the tents the fire was out. Most of us did not get much sleep. Once the mushers arrived we were on duty until the last team went through.

On the fourth night, I had been up for about 17 hours. Four of us bedded down in the tent at about 2 am. The temperature was over 30 below, maybe more. My California temperature gauge stopped reading at -30F. My REI down bag was put to the rating test in a big way. Bottom line..it was deadly COLD. My snow boots were frozen, as well as all of the gear

in the tent. The tent did not have a floor and our sleeping pads were the only insulation from the snow and ice. I never did remove my arctic clothing. I just got in the sleeping bag. It took about an hour to feel warm. The four of us became one to save heat.

I have never experienced real arctic cold before. This was a big part of the adventure. We were high on adrenaline and briefly felt like kids again. The excitement of the trip, the camp, the mushers, the physical work. A few hours of sleep was all that we needed. The next morning we were all pumped up by the fact of having survived just a little of what the mushers were experiencing out on the Iditarod Trail.

My next check point was Safety. The weather out of Nome was bad so we went by snowmobiles. The locals call them snowmachines. The 24 mile run was a real experience. I have only been on a snowmachine once before, during last years race. The day time trip was great. Check point Safety was to be my home for the next week. We camped out on the floor of the only building in town, the bar. The good news is we had an oil stove (heat) and were inside to sleep, out of the cold and wind. The vistas were great, snow as far as you can see. Luckily for me, Cryophobia has never been a problem.

Now for the rest of the story. Yes, I did cut open my left index finger, and yes I did bleed uncontrollably all over the bar. I did stop the bleeding with a small tourniquet. Now the story has it that I was fighting off a Polar Bear or I was attacked by a checker that had been out in the bush to long. Or, I was

opening a can of frozen stew for dinner and slit my finger open. If you pick the right answer, I have a prize for you.

Yes, I did receive outstanding medical care from our on duty vet. The only thing that I refused was the neck collar. I promised not to bite open the stitches. Thanks to the dog antibiotics (big red dog pills) I did not get an infection and was able to return to flying (need the finger for maneuvering the Cub stick) when I got home.

During my time in the bush I flew with Bob Elliott in his C-180. Bob is a great pilot who has the biggest tail on his 180 that I have every observed. I also made a flight from Safety to Nome with pilot Kenn Moon. Kenn has a 180 (small tail) that he flies like a Cub. He made the best landing in Nome. In fact, his landings are so soft and smooth that Kenn has an STC instrument panel touch down light. The light comes on to tell the pilot that has main wheels have landed. The best Piper Pacer award goes to Glen Hanson. I did not get a chance to fly with Glen, but I have lots of photos of his aircraft. Hopefully the

Iditarod pilots will be able to attend our airshow in September.

THE EXPERIMENTAL AIRCRAFT ASSOCIATION CHAPTER #393 NEWSLETTER, JUNE, 1999

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