



CHAPTER 42 NEWSLETTER

March, 2007

Anchorage, Alaska

Monthly newsletter from Chapter 42 of the Experimental Aircraft Association

FROM THE LEFT SEAT

The following is a letter that I received from Will Tipton. We're going to discuss this at our next meeting, so be sure to be there if you're interested.

Mike Luther

Hello friends. I have to say the Saturday breakfast at Pipers was a wonderful event. Rubbing shoulders with good folks who happen to share my interest in aviation was great. I wished I lived closer and could take more advantage of the get-togethers and camaraderie.

Actually, I have enjoyed your friendship before, several times. A few years back, largely through Matt Freeman's (Former Chapter 42 President) effort I helped organize some airstrip volunteer work at Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve. Each time was a lot of fun pulling weeds and planting tie-down anchors and the like. I like to think that the association we (the National Park) have with you (Chapter 42) is rewarding for us both. You are showing your enthusiasm for enjoying parklands with your airplanes, and we are gaining a partner in stewardship for the values that make the park great. It's a fine partnership.

The park has several backcountry airstrips that need tuning-up periodically to keep in useable condition. A seasonal labor crew does most of the heavy lifting (shovel and wheelbarrow work) and over the years we have been successful keeping landing areas from being overgrown with bushes. I'd like to invite Chapter 42 to another work party this summer. The strip that could use help is called Chelle, next to Chelle Lake about 16 miles East of Gulkana. It's a short, rough strip that needs smoothing out. You can fly or drive to Gulkana, or if you fly a suitable aircraft you can land either on the lake or the strip. The time frame would seem to be best in the later part of June to the later part of July, excluding the 4th of July weekend. If you think Chapter 42 would like to organize to do some airstrip work let me know - I can make it happen from this end. Thanks, Will

PS: I am the Facility Manager / Pilot at Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve, and can be reached at will_tipton@nps.gov

NEXT MEETING

Our next meeting, back by popular demand, will be "Movie Night". It will be Tuesday, March 27th at 7pm at the RE/MAX Properties conference room. The address is 110 W. 38th Ave and the entrance is towards the north end of the building. To get there, go north on C St from Tudor Rd. The 1st traffic light you hit is W. 40th, turn east (right) there and then left into the parking lot. We will have popcorn and sodas, water etc for an evening of watching aviation DVDs. I am still trying to determine which movies will air with choices like Sonex flying, Murphy kits, RVs, mountain flying and others. A certain amount of airplane talk will also be present.



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SAFETY THOUGHTS



Are You Blind?

Len Kauffman



Last month we talked about a mid-air nightmare emphasizing the importance of keeping heads-down time to a minimum. This month we'll consider a related topic - the blind spot in our eyes. Under certain conditions this phenomenon could prevent a pilot from seeing an airplane even if he/she is looking outside. The blind spot is nothing new to most, if not all, pilots but is worth revisiting from time to time. Let's take a look at it again using the two small aircraft pictured above. Hold this page at arms length in front of your eyes. Close your left eye and stare at the center of the Cessna while moving the page slowly toward you. The RV disappears. Now close your right eye, look at the center of the RV and bring the page closer. The Cessna disappears. The brain cleverly fills in the blank spot to match the surrounding area.

The blind spot is about 3/4 inch in diameter at one foot from the eye. At a distance of 800 feet, however, it's about 50 feet across and could easily hide an airplane. Move out to one mile and the blind spot is over 300 feet. That's enough to hide a 747 or our entire HomeWing Squadron leading the Blackjacks in a huge diamond formation. Something you really don't want to miss! Remember last month we said two aircraft (at RV speed) heading toward one another will close one mile in less than 10 seconds.

So, what's up with this blind spot? Light entering the eye is focused on the retina at back of the eye where millions of rods and cones sense incoming rays. They send their signals to an area called the optic disc, where they connect to the optic nerve. This circular area, the optic disc, has no rods or cones and is unable to sense light - resulting in the "blind spot."

Normally the blind spot in one eye is covered by vision in the other eye so objects are not missed. A person with only one functional eye can overcome the blind spot by constantly moving the eye so an object will not remain in that spot. Those of us with two good eyes could still "lose" an object (perhaps a plane) by staring in one direction while something (side or center windscreen trim, roll bar, pedestal mounted mag compass, large nose, etc.) blocks vision in one eye.

Let's look at a couple examples. First, stare at a prominent object (doorknob, light switch, etc.) ten or more feet away. Now, hold up your hand at arm's length to block vision of that object with your left eye. You'll see it only in your right eye. Keep your hand in place and slowly move your eyes to the left (maintaining the same elevation). The object disappears. If you're outside, try it with a car at around 300 feet away or an airplane at 800 plus feet.

What about that "large nose" -- you thought I was joking, right? For those of us blessed with a particularly prominent proboscis, try this. Look at the object again, but this time turn your head so left-eye vision is blocked

by your nose (those with a small nose can experience it by placing a finger on your nose to make it larger.) Now, slowly move your eyes (don't turn your head) to the left. It's gone again.

The nose deal is not likely to be a problem since it requires a somewhat contorted position - but the other examples using cockpit obstructions are quite real. The normal blind spot is about 15 degrees outboard of center-vision for each eye. Anything in your airplane that blocks vision in that position can create a blind spot (obviously, if the obstruction is wide enough it will block both eyes). The solution, of course, is to ALWAYS keep head and eyes moving. We normally do, but at times could we be tired and maybe a bit bored on a long cross-country flight over uninspiring terrain? Maybe daydreaming a bit? Could we stare long enough for that unseen plane one mile away to come within 200 feet where its wingtips begin to appear? Remember that the "collision" airplane will have no relative motion in the windscreen and could remain in a blind spot if we let it.

All this might be just an interesting academic exercise. It's PROBABLY not a real threat. Right?

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NEWS FLASH by Tim Rittal

Falcon Insurance of Alaska just opened up an office in Soldotna!! They are actually writing policies on experimental aircraft (and others) in Alaska. A year ago no one would even write a policy for my GlaStar and these guys are now doing it. I got a quote for hull and liability, including first flight. I thought the quote was very reasonable considering my low time and type of aircraft. What a nice surprise. For more information:

Falcon Insurance of Alaska
PO Box 3009
Soldotna, AK 99669
1-888-543-5548

I spoke with Dean Eichholz and he has an e-mail address: deichholz@falconinsurance.com. If you call, let him know how you found out about them and be sure to tell him you are a member of EAA.

GLASTAR PROGRESS REPORT by Tim Rittal

Okay, nobody sent me photos for the newsletter so you get another picture of my GlaStar (to the right). The engine was started for the first time on March 15th and it fired up on the first turn!! Hoorah!! No leaks and no parts flew off. Knocked off 10 items on a 19 item punch list so far this week.

John Davis will be my DAR and I hope for that inspection in early April. Fellow members Chris Gill and Matt Freeman introduced me to Bob Edison and he will be doing the initial test flying since I am so out of current. Perhaps next month we will have a flying GlaStar.

FLY MART

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MONTHLY MEETINGS	4th Tuesday of most months



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**EAA Chapter 42
Monthly Breakfast
2nd Saturday of each month
Pipers, 3333 W. Int'l Airp Rd
9:30am**

HELICOPTER HUMOR, WISDOM AND GREAT QUOTES

If helicopters are so safe, how come there are no vintage/classic helicopter fly-ins? ~Anonymous

The ultimate responsibility of the pilot is to fulfill the dreams of the countless millions of earthbound ancestors who could only stare skyward and wish. ~Anonymous

“The helicopter approaches closer than any other vehicle to fulfillment of mankind’s ancient dream of the flying horse, and the magic carpet” ~Igor Sikorsky

I never liked riding in helicopters because there’s a fair probability that the bottom part will get going around as fast as the top part. ~Lt. Col. John Wittenborn, USAFR.

“If you are in trouble anywhere in the world, an airplane can fly over and drop flowers, but a helicopter can land and save your life” ~Igor Sikorsky, 1947

Real planes use only a single stick to fly. This is why bulldozers & helicopters -- in that order -- need two. ~Paul Slattery

A man can criticize a pilot for flying into a mountainside in fog, but I would rather by far die on a mountainside than in bed. What sort of man would live where there is no daring? Is life itself so dear that we should blame one for dying in adventure? Is there a better way to die?~Charles A. Lindbergh

What freedom lies in flying, what Godlike power it gives to men . . . I lose all consciousness in this strong immortal space crowded with beauty, pierced with danger. ~Charles A. Lindbergh

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