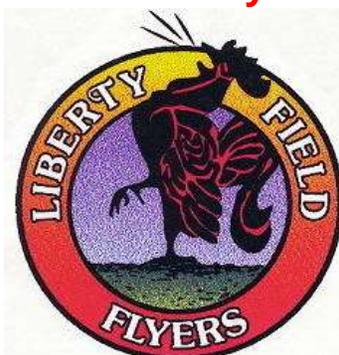


## Liberty Field Flyers November 2009 Newsletter Summary



**USUA Club #3 EAA Chapter #106**

**Officers:**

**President:** Les Goldner  
**Vice Pres.:** Harry Torgovitsky  
**Secretary:** Mark Johnson  
**Treasurer:** Vic Bologna

### November 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting Announcement

This meeting is an important one even though we are winding down our flying year. The meeting will be held at 4:30-PM in Hanger 12C, our new clubhouse. We will plan our XMAS party, nominate new officers, examine our new clubhouse (Mark calls it "The Cockpit"), and plan some flyouts. For those without planes, we often have seats available; so, if you're interested, get involved in this planning process.

We need volunteers to become officers in 2010. The club cannot long survive without new ideas and new people to execute them. Please consider volunteering to become an officer next year and make this known at our November meeting.

Those of us coming early Saturday can get a lesson in flight simulation from our resident simulation expert, Chris Rampoldt. He will demonstrate the club's Microsoft Flight Simulator from 2 to 4-30-PM.

Keys to the clubhouse are available, and members can use the simulator and clubhouse whenever they want. However, we need to keep in mind that we haven't decided to keep the clubhouse on a permanent basis until the membership votes to do so.

After the meeting, thanks to Vic, we will have an impromptu BBQ so we don't have to rush home for dinner.

### October Meeting Minutes

We didn't have a regular meeting in October. Instead, we participated in the Quality Sport Plane flyin at Cloverdale. We ran their BBQ lunch, and thus enlarged our club treasury by \$100.

### XMAS Party

This year Harry and Kearny Plevney have volunteered to have the Christmas extravaganza at their place in Sebastopol. The date is set for Saturday Dec. 5<sup>th</sup>. Bim has volunteered to do the bulk of the cooking and use his grape fermentation expertise to select our wine. However,

we all need to bring some food as well as an exchange gift (under \$20, optional). We will probably have a photo contest (so Bim once again can win). The details will be decided at the November meeting.

### Member News

- For those of you who have not seen them, Bim has posted a few great videos taken in the air from his MX. His latest was a “head-cam” video flying the coast up to Jenner. Bim complained that he couldn’t turn his head to look around (because the camera was attached) so he couldn’t fully enjoy the view. You can see this video at [http://bim.smugmug.com/Movies/along-the-coast/10228184\\_7q8mG#705267506\\_5AwAY-A-LB](http://bim.smugmug.com/Movies/along-the-coast/10228184_7q8mG#705267506_5AwAY-A-LB). Another of Bim’s videos is at [http://bim.smugmug.com/Ultralight-flying/flying-into-the-sunset/9850027\\_BMAtY#669937550\\_NfGFs](http://bim.smugmug.com/Ultralight-flying/flying-into-the-sunset/9850027_BMAtY#669937550_NfGFs).
- Mark Finally got his Rans flying “right”. See his article about it below.
- Harry T. took his wife Charlotte up for the first time in his Challenger. She was impressed with the flight ...but more so by something else. See her article about it below and a photo in the “Flights” section.
- Last month Gordon had an engine-out and was able to glide 3-miles to Liberty Field, where Les helped him fix his Carb problem. Good flying Gordon!
- We have had a rash of 3 flats in the last month; on Vic and Harry’s Challengers, and on Les’s Zenith. The cause of the flats on the Challengers, parked next to each other in Petaluma, are unknown. The Zenith picked up thorns at Clearlake (where Vic told him to park) and the plane landed with a flat back in Petaluma.
- David Micksell has been posting his phenomenal progress on his RX28 Beaver at <http://www.skyguynca.com/beaverday18.html>. (By the way David, what happened to the Mitchell Wing B-10 flying wing you were building?)
- The FAA has made a final “finding” regarding Les’s runway incursion in class C airspace at Lincoln Ne. Les will tell all at the November meeting.
- Jim Grimes finally has two wings on the Ercoupe, and who knows... it may fly one of these days
- Mark, Gordon, Paul and Les passed bi-annual check rides.
- Walton Ferris is interested in partnering in a LSA. If anyone is interested in pls contact him (see our roster, available at November meeting).
- Chris Desmond’s very well built new Zenith 701 will fly as soon as his panel is finished in Tim’s electronics shop at Petaluma.
- Andre’s Zenith 701 has a new paint job. We are speculating it will enable him to land in his pot field without being seen (just kidding, see below).



## **LESSONS LEARNED ON THE CARE & FEEDING OF A ROTAX 503 ENGINE**

*(By Mark Johnson)*

After experiencing 2 engine seizures in 2 months in my Rans S-5, at a cost of \$2,000 each, I have finally learned my lesson... you have to treat the whole plane. This has been my approach to my acupuncture patients for 20 years but I didn't do it with my plane and I paid the price.

My first engine shut downs came after a few hundred hours of flight and I attributed them to electrical shorts, then dirt in the fuel line etc. because the engine always started up immediately after stopping.

With each quick fix, I thought we solved the problem. In other words, I treated minor symptoms instead of looking further into deeper possible problems. After the final seizure, I realized I had been flying with a hot piston and my temperature gauge wasn't working.

After replacing the pistons and heads and a new gauge, off I went again to have the engine seize up again after only 4 hours! This time I went down in a newly plowed field and broke my front landing gear.

Nothing like a little crisis to wake one up This time, there was evidence the heads weren't chamfered properly by CPS and since they agreed to replace the pistons and heads, I decided to have the entire plane overhauled... carburetor, gear box, prop rebalanced, new front landing gear, new tires and new bungees on my main landing struts. And, of course, new Gorilla tape everywhere. I also bought a new EIS unit which is much more accurate than the old gauges were.

As a result, I have a smooth flying plane for the first time in a long time. I also hope to get a parachute in the next few months and be able to take some of the longer trips to Monument Valley and elsewhere in the spring and summer.

## **The Airport Owl**

*(By Charlotte Torgovitsky)*

Thursday morning was the chosen day. The morning was sunny and calm, promising to be perfect for my first flight up with my husband Harry piloting. I bundled up against the winds, and brought my binoculars along, excited at the prospect of seeing the Sonoma countryside, Tomales Bay, and our beautiful coast.

We flew out past Swan Lake, and sure enough, there must have been eighteen swans, and their cygnets floating calmly below us. Passing over the bay, we left the Turkey Vultures behind, still rising on the thermals. Flying low along the beach, reeling clouds of shorebirds moved away from below our plane.

Wonderful as it is to be up there, flying with the birds, the highlight of my day occurred on ground, at the airport. As Harry prepared the plane for departure, and others arrived to join us, the activity disturbed a little creature. Out from his roost in the cowling of an adjacent airplane, flew a small owl!



There, in the open, on the tarmac, yellow eyes staring straight at us, bobbing up and down on his long legs, and seeming most indignant, was a Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*). These birds were once common throughout North America, thriving in the grasslands and prairies, living cooperatively with ground dwelling rodents. They are now listed as endangered in the Great Plains and Canadian Prairies due to the widespread poisoning of prairie dogs, plowing of fields and general urban sprawl. Breeding populations have been absent from Sonoma and Marin since the 1980's ; but are starting to re-establish colonies in the Bay Area, most notably at Arrowhead Marsh, near the Oakland Airport.

No other owl is seen in the open during the day. They may perch on short posts, or simply keep watch close to their burrows, which most often are abandoned ground squirrel holes. Both sexes have similar plumage; white throat, barred breast and wings; and are the same size; about 9" tall, with a wingspan of about 21 ". Females tend to move a little further south during the winter months, so the airport owl is most likely a male. They are alert both day and night, but most active at dawn and dusk. Prey is caught with their feet, either running, hopping or walking along the ground. During the day most prey items are insects, at night small mammals are caught.

Occasionally they will dig their own burrows during the breeding season, and sometimes colonies of breeding owls will live symbiotically with families of ground squirrels. Both creatures benefit; the squirrels have extra eyes on the lookout for predators, and the owls

get accommodations for their brood, plus a built-in source of food! Sixty-five percent of the Burrowing Owl's diet consists of invertebrates, most highly favored are dung beetles. A specific dung beetle occurs in the latrines of the squirrel nests, but the owls also cultivate the presence of these beetles by collecting and lining their burrows with cow or horse manure. If the manure is removed, the owls replace it the very next day! It could also help insulate the burrow, and cover their scent.

The burrows can be 6 to 10 feet long, with twists and turns before coming to the nesting chamber. The nest is lined with grasses and feathers to accommodate the clutch of eggs. The pair is monogamous, with the female incubating the eggs while the male brings food. Burrowing Owl babies have the ability to mimic the rattling warning of a Rattlesnake; certainly good protection from potential predators!

I returned a few days later to see if the owl was still around; he was! Perhaps these owls can be encouraged to stay and breed in Sonoma County again; there are enough open fields and certainly we still have populations of ground squirrels. Thank you, Charlie, for the wonderful photos, which will be used to help educate people about the presence of these incredible little owls.



## Minimum Flight Altitudes and Flying Along the Coast

*(by Harry Torgovitsky, Attorney at Law)*

The following are some rules we should bear in mind when we fly so as not to endanger our certificates. I've paraphrased and summarized the rules to remove the legalese.

### Minimum Altitudes Generally:

CFR Part 91.119 spells out **minimum** altitudes, except on takeoff and landing, as follows:

1. Anywhere - altitude allowing, on power failure, an emergency landing without undue hazard to persons or property on the surface.
2. Congested Areas - 1000 ft above highest obstacle within a horizontal radius of 2000 ft of aircraft.
3. Not Congested Areas - 500 ft above surface, except over water or sparsely populated areas, in which case not closer than 500 ft to any person, vessel, vehicle, or structure.

**Minimum Altitudes over Wildlife Sanctuaries and over wildlife:**

1. 2000 ft recommended over sanctuaries. No harassment of wildlife and no takeoff or landing. Boundaries are on sectional.
2. 1000 ft required over southwest tip of Tomales Bay, all around tip of Pt. Reyes, within 1 NM of Farallones and 1 NM of Bolinas Lagoon, also some other areas south of GG Bridge.
3. 1000 ft over CA Sea Otter Game Refuge, inland to Hwy 1 and out 3 NM. (Santa Cruz and Monterey areas)
4. Outside of Wildlife Refuges - Aircraft may not harass, disturb, worry, molest, rally, concentrate, harry, chase, drive, herd, or torment wildlife.

**Note:**

Immunity from FAA sanctions may be possible through a NASA Safety Reporting System report, but only if the instance was unintentional.



**Red areas:** 1000' minimums, extending inland further than shown

## Flights Since our Last newsletter

Since the last time we did a newsletter we have been very busy; Half Moon Bay, Nut Tree, Clearlake, Boonville, Skypark (most Saturdays), the Lincoln Airshow, and our other traditional haunts. Rather than tell you about each flights, we have provided some pictures provided by Chris, Jim G., Paul, Les and Bim. If you are interested in more details, come to our November meeting.















## Our Club's Tradition

Our Liberty Field Flyers club has an interesting history and tradition in the Petaluma area. Thanks to the miracle of OCR (optical Character recognition), we are able to reprint this history from old newsletters. These Newsletters were long, sometimes 20 pages or more, with long detailed minutes and articles written by many of the members. I wish there was a little more of this club spirit today so we could include articles like the ones included in this Newsletter by Charlotte and Mark.

This month's historic article was written in October 1995, 14 years ago by the "Chapter Reporter", Jean Chapman. It mentions some current members (like Paul, Jim G., Charlie, & Gordon) and some no longer around. The planes have changed, but there is a lot of similarities to our current flying. It's a normal day in the air... Read on.

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Saturday, September 9. LFUF meeting day. LFUF poker run day. My birthday. Well, if I can't fly, maybe I can go wave fare wells to people who can fly. I headed for Petaluma Airport, careful to arrive well before the 9 am departure time.

Jim Grimes, Kelly Knowlton and Paul Lansdorf were standing at the approach to Two Niner Diner not looking as miserable as I had predicted when I looked at the overcast weather. Schellville was to be their first landing site. I had just driven by there and the ceiling looked about like Petaluma's, somewhat more than 1200 feet but with visibility easily 3 miles in every direction. I relayed my Schellville weather report, which I thought was great news. Still not miserable, but come to think of it, not cheerful either. Organizer (Carl Wilby) hadn't appeared yet. LFUFers can't go unorganized? Times are a-changing!

A few minutes later, here came Carl. Looking organized. By then it was a few minutes after nine. No creature was stirring anywhere at Petaluma Airport. General Aviation was absolutely soundless. Nothing was moving anywhere on the flight line let alone a runway. But a few minutes later, all the ultralighters straightened to wide alert. Hark! Hark Hark! The unmistakable gentle sound of an ultralight off to the northeast! And then we could see, right there in the appropriate ultralight pattern, a white *GT* cruising along downwind. There is life in the air! Petaluma Airport lives!

Gordon Dupries came around smartly on crosswind very close to the end of the runway, landed and taxied in to where his inspired companions were readying their ultralights for the advertised poker run.

Oh, oh. Carl had put in his new propeller gears Friday (even when Gordon had arrived at 7:30 Saturday morning to help him while Carl was still at home in bed), but his right tire was definitely flat. Definitely would not hold air. Definitely had to have a new tube. Off to get a replacement then Gordon cheerfully and quickly served as dumb helper following Carl's expert leadership. In record time they had a tube in that tire--but they'd put in the wrong tube. By that time, all the ultralight folks or almost ultralight folks had gathered around to lend a hand or a word of advice. Tire got taken off and this time, the proper tube was inserted and inflated. Eager hands grabbed the struts to lift the landing gear off the box on which it was perched for tire repairs. Calamity! Eagerness had forgotten you lift (or pull in any direction) on struts only near their points of attachment. The eager lift got the wheel back onto the earth, but created a new problem with the strut braces.

Someone (Jim, I think) had a battery operated drill in his car, which he fetched. The drill even had a charge. Someone else (Carl?) had a bit. Lots of hands pulled, pushed ailerons, held drills, inserted Carl's rivet and repaired the damage. Wow. Just like Liberty Field even though we're in the midst of the Big Ones of a Real Airport.

All pilots manned their machines. Carl started his engine (Flightstar), Paul started his engine (Typhoon), Gordon started his engine (*GT*), Kelly and Jim hit the primer and the starter on their engine (Talon) and hit the starter until their poor ultralight's battery could do no more. Out came a car battery and battery connectors. Really spun that prop--felt ready to take off as an electric ultralight. But not a cough from the engine. "Primer's not working." "Choke it with your hand." "Anybody have some ether?" "RD40 works just as well as ether." I really didn't hear any nasty words. Of course, I thought it was none of my business to try to read any minds under the circumstances. Noon came. Talons Rotax ran briefly only once then was silent silent silent.

In the meantime, clouds were thinning, the air was gently warming. In fact, the sky was virtually all blue. Carl the organizer decided it was time to take the three who were ready on the first leg of the poker run. I leapt in my car

and drove directly to Schellville, watching the sky for ultralights along the way. I parked by the sign that says, "Sonoma Valley Airport" thinking I've used the wrong name for the airport near Schellville all these years.

I walked down the line to the end of the strip. A biplane took off, having tacked his way down the line like a sailboat into the wind. He had two passengers in the front seat and probably could see even less than usual. He took off on the nearest runway--the faster to turn over a series of paying passengers no doubt. Then I heard the sweet sound of ultralight engines, looked up to see all three familiar beauties coming from the west. Carl, the Organizer, leading and probably on the radio. They came round smartly and landed close behind each other toward the west and me. Landings to make one proud.

Gordon, Paul and Carl had just got their legs stretched after their grueling 15 minute flight, (it really was farther from Liberty Field, you know) when we heard that same sweet sound again. It was Kelly and Jim in the Talon. They'd fixed their problem and were smilingly catching up. Charley McKiva came strolling up the taxiway to say "Hello." I'd walked right by his Hummer (well, it was on the far side of the flight line from me) on the way out to watch for arrivals. He'd have joined the poker run but he has engine problems. He's next to the two-place Falcon that was on Liberty Field years ago when it belonged to Chuck Yeager and whoever bought it next. It still says "Glorious Glynnis" or whatever, painted on its nose but looks grungy and forlorn as if it hasn't flown for years. Charlie said he'd been doing quite a bit of flying till he had engine problems. He thinks Schellville is working out fine for him but he would like to be in a hangar.

Pilots and copilots drew their poker cards from Carl's deck, but later events seemed to indicate Carl may be skilled at sleight of hand even while flying.

The wind was still gentle. Pilots taxied out and took off smartly for their five minute flight to the San Pablo Bay strip and I drove home thinking about my day.

I spent three hours watching people try to get ultralights ready to fly, which, alas, is not previously unheard of even if I'd prefer to think it is not typical. I'd stood around on the paving watching people work. (I really was willing to do the work, I just seemed unnecessary so I didn't get my hands dirty.) (Honest.) It was a lovely *day*, not too hot and not too cold. It was almost 2 o'clock when I got home, thinking, "Well that was fun." I'm walking proof that once you are seriously bitten by the ultralight bug, there is no hope for reasonable behavior. The best you can hope for is not to neglect beloved ones outrageously. Now my dream is to be flying proof again.

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