



# IAC Chapter 15

## Monthly Newsletter

JANUARY 17, 2011

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### Calendar of Events

Chapter Meeting  
January 17, 2010

*Executive Beech-  
Signature  
Charles B. Wheeler*



### IAC CHAPTER 15 Meeting Minutes for December

There are no minutes for the December meeting, as it consisted of a great Christmas party graciously hosted by Brenda and Mark Lea. The food was wonderful, as was the attendance. Here are a few pictures!



Jan Thornton and Brenda



The Wittenborn Women



Kim Pardon- What Would We Do Without You?



My Favorite Lee Picture!

We were so happy to see the Thorntons at the party and look forward to their presence at future meetings and events! It seemed like most of our members were there, and all had a great time together. It was great seeing Connie and Jim again, especially considering the effort it took to come all the way from Nixa, MO! The connections we make through aerobatics run long and deep!

Here is a great one from Scotty McGinnis:



Bevo in his Buecker

LOW & LOADED  
My Hero

It was sometime during the summer of 1957 when Bevo Howard performed his aerobatic performance at Craig AFB, in Alabama. I was stationed there, and attended the air show, my first. Bevo performed with his German made Buecker Jungmeister, a rather stocky looking bi-plane, powered by the 7-cylinder American made Warner radial engine. His performance was extremely impressive, but what astonished me the most was his outside square loop, in which the entire square was sitting right on the parking apron, and the top of it located not much more than a hundred feet in altitude. Zooming across the bottom of it with the tip of his vertical tail about 10 feet from the cement he came close enough to me that I could have hit him with a baseball. It was some 53 years ago and I can still see his act with a little prodding of my memory bank. It was incredible, (awesome, if you're young) and exciting. Many airshows had my full attention over the years since Bevo, but I just didn't see anything like that darn square out-side loop of his, until...

Along about 1989 or thereabouts, I flew to the Reno Air Races with a full plane load of family and friends, and while walking down through the pits, and just behind the spectator grand-stands I noticed a stagger-wing look-alike, painted black, doing an aerobatic performance for the crowd. At the end of the routine came an outside square loop, and one every bit as impressive as Bevo's had been during the late 50's. At first I thought it was a Beech Stagger-wing, but, if I'm remembering correctly, the show announcer said it was an Italian built aeroplane. Then, the gate was opened allowing it to come into the pit area, and it taxied right up to where I was standing, swung-around into its parking spot, and shut the engine down. The door opened and out onto the bottom wing climbed the pilot. Bouncing off the wing with a bit of pep in her stride, was the pilot, a beautiful little blonde girl. She had a purse on a shoulder strap, and slipped it up on her shoulder as she walked past me, and said "afternoon" to me. Life is good! SM

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DEFINITELY DO NOT TRY THIS  
AT HOME!

Harold Neumann Corner

More Roy Thornton Contributions Below:



"From a race horse start I planned to stay low and make the 180 degree turn around the first pylon onto the racecourse with my low wing just skimming the grass in the turn. When I did everyone else was higher. After the turn I was low, alone, out of the traffic, and in the lead. I then poured it on and widened my lead until the others throttled back. I then throttled back to save my engine. My strategy paid off. I was comfortable flying low because of my experience going back to the Jenny and the windmill on the farm. Ben, on the ground, gave me signals as to whether I should hold my position or add power and move out. To cut the pylons close I banked into the turns and added power so I wouldn't lose speed. I aimed directly towards the pylon and relaxed pressure enough to take me just outside it, and below the top of the pylon. Once around it I would throttle back some on the straightaway to let the engine breathe and cool. A clean airplane would not lose much speed when you did, and you could gain a few rpms then by leaning the mixture.

You didn't want to use much rudder in the turns or you would gain altitude. This caused you to lose speed and was dangerous. A ravine beyond the home pylon created turbulence. In a vertical turn this caused the airplane to want to go inverted. My aerobatic experience saved me because I knew I needed forward stick pressure to keep the nose up and avoid a split S with no chance to recover, not too much or too sudden, or you would snap roll into the ground. You couldn't fly races like a machine. It was a touch and feel thing that could only come from experience.

It seems crazy when I look back on it, but anybody could enter a race. Skill and experience in other types of flying did not make you a racer. Rookies killed and injured themselves and others. They wouldn't let anybody enter the Indianapolis 500 today unless he had proven himself. We did just that, and I repeat myself; it was crazy."

Then on Labor Day he flew "Mr. Mulligan" to victory in the spectacular free-for-all Thompson Trophy Race despite difficulties. "This was a different kind of race requiring a different strategy. I talked to Benny before flying the "Mr. Mulligan" to qualify for the Thompson. I told him that the engine had never been fully opened up at low altitude so I was going to fly it just fast enough to qualify, and only then open the throttle to see what kind of speed we could get.

After qualifying I added power until I recognized the burning odor of engine blow by. Cylinders were scored and fuel was blowing by the piston rings and out through the crankcase breather. A mixture of oil and fuel was coming through the firewall. I throttled back immediately and was able to land OK. I recognized that smell from the experience with the "Mike" in 1934 when the supercharger case ruptured during a race. "Mr. Mulligan's" burned cylinders had to be replaced in time for the race that afternoon."

"It was a hot day. As I remember it was nearly a hundred degrees that morning and even hotter in the afternoon as we worked to get the airplane ready by race time. It was already a little hectic when official word came down that the race time had been moved up because thunderstorms were forecasted to pass over the field at the scheduled starting time.

This added to the confusion, but we were ready in time to start the engine and taxi the airplane to its place on the starting line. There had been no time for



a test of any kind after the engine repairs.

The faster qualifiers were on my left. Roscoe Turner had the inside position in his golden Wedell Williams, a low wing airplane with a big supercharged radial engine that could develop over a thousand horsepower.

Next to him was Steve Wittman in his plenty fast red and silver homebuilt "Bonzo." He could win it all if he kept the big liquid cooled Curtiss military engine going.

They continued to hold us on the line with our engines running. The smaller racers were poised for the race horse start. Roger Rae in the Keith-Rider, Art Chester in his "Jeep," Marlon McKeen in "Miss Los Angeles," and Joe Jacobson in the "Mike." The oddball airplane was a big Seversky Amphibian with Lee Miles at the controls.

My strategy to win was to use the "Mulligan's" ability to leap into the air helped by its controllable pitch prop which could be adjusted from the cabin. I planned to beat them all around the scattering pylon and lead going onto the racecourse. After that they would have to catch me.

They kept stalling us and it was getting hotter and hotter in the cabin. I increased the throttle to a fast idle to prevent the spark plugs fouling.

The thunderstorm forecast had been revised and now they wanted to meet the original starting time because of the millions who would be listening to their radios for the scheduled broadcast.

We were keyed up and it seemed like they held us sitting there for hours. I know it was at least 20 or 30 minutes.

I periodically ran the power up to 30 inches of manifold pressure and checked the mags, which were OK. My cylinder head temperatures soared and my own temperature was rising, too.

The starter finally raised his flag and I added all the power my brakes could hold. The flag began to circle, and when it dropped I released the brakes and shoved the throttle forward.

(EXPLETIVE!) The engine just about quit. It misfired and shook the airplane. I could have given up at that moment. The others were moving out, and I was left smoking at the starting line. So much for my original strategy.

I was more than a little mad, and remembered what Ben had told a man who viewed the "Mr. Mulligan" under construction and asked if it was going to fly. 'If it doesn't,' Ben told him, 'it will have to taxi like hell.' I thought, you SOB! You may not fly but you are at least going to taxi like hell.

I added all the power I dared, remembering the pistons that had burned that morning. I got the airplane moving and was bouncing over the ground, waiting for the tail wheel to come up. Everyone else was in the air and on their way to the first pylon.

With the tail wheel just off the ground I was picking up some speed. I was

also using up a lot of the airport.

I had the propeller in flat pitch with the RPMs increasing. I began to jockey with the stick to see if I had enough speed to lift off. Back on the stick so the wing could develop more lift, but not too much, which would stall the wing. The main gear wheels leave the ground. Stick forward to gain airspeed. Wheels touch the earth and skip back into the air when I ease the stick back. We leave the ground in a three point attitude. The end of the airfield is right in front of me. I am in the air, flying toward the scatter pylon. There are no airplanes ahead. They have all rounded it and are on the race course.

I arrive at the pylon flying on the edge of a stall and make a careful turn around it. I was gambling on the fouled plug clearing off during the first couple of laps. All through the first lap I was concerned about the engine backfiring, which would have damaged the supercharger and the race would have been over for me.

By the end of the second lap I had established the power setting and the prop pitch I would fly the remainder of the race with.

I was in the race now, and the new strategy was to finish and finish in the money if I could. I was getting all the speed I could without risking damaging the engine, which would put me out of the race and out of the money.

By the middle of the race I was beginning to pass some of the slower racers. Rounding a pylon at the peak of the race a severe and scary vibration shook the airplane. I throttled back momentarily and considered whether or not to drop out of the race. I decided to continue and went back to the power settings I'd been using. There was a question before I banked around each pylon--would the vibration return?

It was near the end of the race when I pulled up on Steve Wittman in his "Bonzo." He added some power, but did not pull away. He then gave way and let me pass. As I went by I could see his engine was losing coolant and his windshield was covered with it. He had serious problems but was hanging in there to finish the race.

I was in second place now, and just as I rounded the home pylon I could see Roscoe rounding the next one. I overcame the temptation to go after him. He had too big a lead and it was too late in the race.

I was happy to be in second place after my miserable start.

My problem now was to avoid cutting a pylon. I'd flown the course very early that morning in a slow airplane, and I knew the landmarks.

As I rounded the home pylon again I could see Turner landing. I flew another lap, got my flag, flew another insurance lap in case I'd cut a pylon, then pulled up away from the course to cool off and unwind after the tension of the race.

As I approached the field some of the smaller racers that had finished behind me were landing. I hit the engine cut out button Ben had installed on the control stick. I was a little fast and wanted to land short. As I came over

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The story just keeps getting better! Thanks again Roy for contributing so much to Chapter 15!!!

Respectfully submitted,

Nan Funkhouser



