



IAC Chapter 15

Monthly Newsletter

JUNE 20, 2011

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Calendar of Events

Chapter Meeting
June 20, 2010

Executive Beech-
Signature
Charles B. Wheeler



IAC 15 Meeting Minutes: 04/18/2011 Submitted by Dave Maine

We met at Executive Beech at the Downtown airport at 7pm. Attendees included Grant Wittenborn, Lee Crites, Rod Flinn, Nan Funkhouser, John Handley, Brian von Bevern, Micki Shetterly, Paul Thomson, John Wittenborn, Roy and Jan Thorton, and Dave Maine.

Lee reported a balance of \$11,967.18. He thanked everyone for their love and support through his recent heart surgery and recovery.

Micki reported that Greg got his competency card to 500ft. He, and sons Joe and Jeff all flew in the same air show in Texas. Greg flew his One Design, Jeff flew his RV-8, and Joe flew "his" A-10 in the USAF demo flight. The crowd loved it! Greg plans to fly in the KC Aviation Expo air show.

We agreed to send \$100 to the Moonlight Fund for Kyle and Amanda Franklin.

Our next meeting will be a fly-out breakfast at Billard airport in Topeka on Saturday May 21, 9am.

Here is Dave Maine's Pitts News:

Pitts update: Aaron delivered it to OJC without incident June 1. He says it flies just like a Pitts should. Gerry Gippner and I are working on the annual Condition Inspection. That is going well so far. A couple of things will drag it out a few more weeks: I need to de-gauss the tubing in the cockpit area to get the compass working. I need to select, buy, and install a transponder. I need to get transition training. Currently scheduled to fly with Bruce Ballew in St. Louis July 1-2.

- Dave

Congratulations Dave on acquiring your Pitts and on getting it to the KC area! Now all we have to do is sit back and watch you fly it!

KC AIR EXPO

Nan Funkhouser has secured a booth for Chapter 15 at the KC Air Expo on August 21 & 22. Materials are on their way from EAA and we will need volunteers to help us set up, man the booth and tear down. Anyone able to help can contact Grant or Nan (816-589-5334). It should be an exciting year for a booth, as Joe Shetterly is scheduled to fly the show, and hopefully Greg Shetterly will be able to join him. They are still working on the details. Thanks in advance for your help!

Barnstorming the Airshows, Etc.

ROY THORNTON

In 1933 Harold Neumann, his wife Inez, and their infant daughter lived in Moline, Illinois. Ben Howard had hired him to fly his racing plane "Ike" to airshows that season, and Harold was at the Moline airport on April 27th to fly his own Lambert powered Monocoupe to Kansas City where the racer was based. Ben was there too, enroute to Kansas City from Chicago flying a NAT airlines Ford trimotor. They decided to fly alongside one another part of the way, and Ben told Harold later that he was impressed with the Monocoupe's clean lines in flight. He could see how the air passed over the wing and fuselage top in a smooth, unbroken flow. Ben had flown with John Livingston in his clipped wing Monocoupe earlier so now he'd seen it both inside and from the outside. He'd recently completed his "Ike" and "Mike" racers, but could already have been thinking about building the biggest Monocoupe in the sky; "Mr. Mulligan".

The racers were kept in the NAT hangar in Kansas City, but Ben's employment contract forbade his air racing or flying in airshows. John Livingston, who was managing the American Air Aces group, would fly the "Ike" in the show's air race exhibition and do high speed aerobatics. John had ordered a racer from Clyde Cessna, and there was an understanding that when it was delivered later that summer, Harold would assume the airshow flying of the "Ike". Harold was to be paid \$75 a week, plus expenses, and his duties included maintaining the airplane. On April 30th he took the "Ike" up for the first time and found it was light on the controls and a wonderful airplane to fly with a solid feeling of control from the snug cockpit. You felt the flying action and engine operation as though you were a part of the airplane, and though it was built for speed and high performance, the "Ike" had no vicious traits. If you approached a stall it did not drop suddenly but warned you with a gentle wing buffet. This was desirable because the airplane had no flaps, brakes or landing gear shock absorbers so you wanted to touch down as soft, as short and as slow as possible. The high gear put the airplane in the proper attitude for a fully stalled landing, but this left you without directional control with the rudder during roll out. The tail skid digging into turf helped to brake and contributed to directional control, but short bursts of power and rudder bar kicking were necessary right up to a full stop. The harder the landing surface, the less the tail skid helped, and if you landed on a hard surfaced runway, you gunned the engine to get

momentary control with the rudder and headed for the turf where the tail skid could do its work. If you had no turf, you kept the tail low, used blasts from the engine to keep the airplane straight, and if you ran out of runway you applied a full power burst with full rudder to ground loop the airplane. With power chopped the friction of the tires and tail skid would usually bring the "Ike" to a stop within one or two turns. The gear was strongest with the tail low because at that angle the wings still generated lift and prevented the airplane from landing hard. If you bounced the airplane it was best to apply full power and go around for another try. You had to stay ahead of the airplane. There was no such thing as a routine landing with the "Ike". The typical landing approach was a flat glide with little or no power and your airspeed under strict control. Over the runway boundary you cut the power and waited for the airplane to begin to sink. You then added a bit of power and felt for the runway. You had very good power response during landing. You never slipped to lose altitude. The fuselage blanked out the wing, which would drop while the airplane dropped like a rock. The throttle was on the left side of the cockpit and to taxi the "Ike" on a hard surface, Harold would walk on the left side of the plane, his hand on the throttle inside the cockpit, adding slight power while bumping the airplane to turn it one way or another. The propeller pitch was adjusted on the ground to meet the next flight's requirement.

On May 2nd Harold flew the "Ike" to Ft. Worth for an airshow the following weekend. The open cockpit was not ideal for comfort on cross country flights, but draftiness was minimized by the smallness of the cockpit opening. There was just enough windshield to direct the slipstream around your head. Visibility was excellent in every direction and much different from looking out of the Monocoupe. The wind crackling around the little windshield left Harold deaf for about 24 hours after he arrived and after landing it was strange when the first person to talk to him opened and closed his mouth from which no sound came, making Harold think of a fish. After this experience, Harold stuffed cotton in his ears when he flew the "Ike" cross country.

He never used the airspeed indicator in flying or landing. He flew by attitude and feel rather than numbers, and after flying cross country he would approach the airport at reduced speed as if to land, fly low down the runway, then pull up and go around again to land. This gave Harold a chance to look over the usually strange field's surface and determine what type of landing would be required. It also helped make the transition to

controlling the lower landing speed after flying cross country. This dragging the field maneuver led some local wags to report, "He always overshoots the airport the first time."

The "Mike" racer had been left behind in Kansas City. It was nearly identical to the "Ike" except for a supercharged engine, which made it faster but unsuited for aerobatics.

A young Kansas City man had built an antique type airplane and Ben Howard hired him to fly it in the airshows. It was like a Wright Brothers airplane, and you flew it out in the open. He started to Ft. Worth, but turned back almost before he got out of town, because he was unable to cope with the cold spring winds. Harold told him the only way to get the airplane safely to Ft. Worth was to disassemble it and take it down on a trailer. No one wanted to take the responsibility for ordering this. Harold did, and then left town before Ben arrived to find what had taken place. Because he'd arrived early, Harold had plenty of time to practice aerobatics before the show. Later, enroute to Indiana, the low flying antique craft struck a single telephone line and crashed. The pilot survived the crash, but fighting the resulting fire he breathed in flames, which seared his lungs, and he died a few days later.

After the Ft. Worth show, Harold flew the "Ike" to Oklahoma City and got some more aerobatic practice before the show on the 19th and 20th of May. The routine he practiced included snap rolls at the top of the loop, and dives during which airspeed approached 300 MPH before he pulled up into a vertical roll. The finish was a series of low level slow rolls in front of the stands. The air race demonstration usually concluded with a low level inverted speed dash past the stands, then pulling up into a victory roll finish. For years Harold was billed as the inverted speed record holder. He had this painted on the nose of the "Ike" and the title was never challenged.

The show that weekend was rained out, but the next weekend the Oklahoma City crowd got everything they came to see. They were thrilled by a Ford trimotor performing low level loops, snap rolls and stunts made more spectacular when performed by an airliner. Up until then George Brill had been doing low level fly-bys and some limited aerobatics that did not excite the paying customers. Today Harold suspected the hand of a pilot who knew and could fly the airplane at its performance limits, and went over to where it had been taxied away from the crowd after landing. He saw Ben

Howard cautiously open the door and carefully look around to be sure he couldn't be seen exiting. That could cost him his job with NAT airlines. George Brill gained great confidence flying with Ben that day and went on to thrill audiences wherever he performed. It was not unusual to have a local talent participate in traveling airshows and Roy Hunt from nearby Norman, Oklahoma flew a brilliant low level aerobatic show in his Great Lakes biplane. The show's regular pilot, Art Killips, was on the spot. He went up to meet the challenge flying his clipped-wing Waco lower than he'd ever performed before. He went into a series of power snap rolls no more than fifty feet off the ground. A power snap roll is a high speed horizontal spin. A wing is stalled and full rudder brings the airplane around a spot on the horizon while speed drives it on a straight line. If the nose gets too high, the airplane will get too slow, won't hold the line, and will barrel the roll. Art had no margin for error as he snapped through his first roll. His nose came up a little and he snapped through another. His nose came up a little more, but he got away with another. Harold remembers saying out loud, "Don't try another." Half through it the nose got too high and Art barreled into the muddy ground. He was killed and the crash drove his body into the front cockpit area with the engine. Ironically, Roy Hunt was hired to replace Art Killips in the show and when the Curtiss Candy Company later contracted with him to promote their new Butterfinger candy bar, Roy came to be called "Butterfinger Hunt". Harold was to have another anxious time before the show moved on. Ben Howard had flown down from Kansas City with his wife, Maxine, "Mike", in Harold's Monocoupe, and had to get back to work his scheduled NAT flight. The sod field was in poor condition, very wet, and the Monocoupe had wheel pants. If they filled with mud it would slow acceleration, or possibly bring the takeoff run to a sudden, disastrous halt. The field was long enough, but up grade to near the very end, where it leveled off. Harold watched with growing anxiety as his maroon colored Monocoupe continued to run uphill without breaking free of the ground. He thought, and might even have said out loud, "There goes my Monocoupe", but near the very end of the field, where it was level, it took to the air.

Harold had been gone from home three weeks when he lifted off from Oklahoma City the next morning at daybreak, bound for Kansas City where he would drop off the "Ike" and continue on in his Monocoupe for a day or two of home life before the next show.

See you at tonight's meeting!

Respectfully submitted,

Nan Funkhouser

