



# IAC Chapter 15

## Monthly Newsletter

DECEMBER 30, 2015

VOLUME 9, NUMBER 5

### Calendar of Events

#### Chapter Meeting

KIXD Gardner  
Conference Room  
Signature Flight  
Support



***DON'T MISS THE ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY AT THE  
WITTENBORNS JANUARY 9 AT 5PM!***

### *FROM NAN*

Newsletters have been few and far between this past year, but hopefully this will make up for missed issues. A very exciting story written by Dave Maine's father is at the end of this newsletter. I got to talking with Dave at the Contest in Newton last October and was interested to find out that his dad was quite a pilot with a keen interest in aviation his entire life. I mentioned that it would be great reading for the newsletter, so many thanks to Dave for sending on a great read from a great pilot!!!

### *MEETING MINUTES AND A NOTE FROM DAVE MAINE*

I really fell behind in publishing IAC 15 minutes this year. For some of the meetings, my notes were so sparse, I decided not to publish them. Anyway, I have attached what I have, and I will hopefully be more diligent in 2016 as Treasurer.

- Dave

IAC 15 Meeting Minutes: 07/28/2015

Submitted by Dave Maine

We met at Signature, at the New Century airport at 7pm. Attendees included Bev Wittenborn, Grant Wittenborn, and Dave Maine.

John Wittenborn ordered flowers for Steve O'Berg's funeral. Grant will follow up on the idea of sending a \$100 memorial gift Steve's family.

Grant secured the Garmin sponsorship (\$1000) for the Barnstormer. He will look into getting some Garmin consumer products to raffle off.

IAC 15 Meeting Minutes: 08/17/2015

Submitted by Dave Maine

We met at Signature, at the New Century airport at 7pm. Attendees included John and Bev

Wittenborn, Grant Wittenborn, Lee Crites, Paul Thomson, John Ostmeyer, Nan Funkhouser, John Morrissey, and Dave Maine.

Plans for the Barnstormer contest (Aug 28-30):

- Contest fee will be \$125
- Grant will be the Safety Officer and will brief the weather
- The Saturday morning briefing will be 8am
- Lee reported the \$1000 donation from Garmin
- The Garmin consumer products will be raffled at \$5 per ticket
- We will put out the box markers at 9am on Sat 22.

IAC 15 Meeting Minutes: 09/28/2015  
Submitted by Dave Maine

We met at Signature, at the New Century airport at 7pm. Attendees included John and Bev Wittenborn, Rod Flinn, and Dave Maine.

Recap of the Barnstormer contest (Aug 28-30):

- Low ceilings prevented most flights on Saturday, and no one flew on Sunday.
- 13 pilots were registered.
- 8 pilots in the Intermediate and Advanced categories flew one flight each.
- Income from contest fees, Garmin donation, food donations jars, and raffle tickets was \$3467.
- Expenses were about \$3300.

Our IXD box waiver expires at the end of October. We are expecting that Chris Hall at the FAA will help us renew it seamlessly.

Rod reported on a Red Bull race he attended in Dallas.

We agreed that the Christmas Party would be in January 2016, at a location to be determined.

IAC 15 Meeting Minutes: 10/26/2015  
Submitted by Dave Maine

We met at Signature, at the New Century airport at 7pm. Attendees included John and Bev Wittenborn, Grant Wittenborn, Lee Crites, Paul Thomson, Gary Mitchell, John Ostmeyer, and Dave Maine.

Lee reported the outcome of the Barnstormer was income of \$3517 and expenses of \$3297.

We discussed moving our Play Day activity to the northeast side of IXD (New Century Air Service), because of the ramp fees Signature has begun charging us.

We decided on Sat Jan 9 for our Christmas party, at a location to be announced.

Our IXD box waiver was renewed by the FAA, but with some arbitrary changes. John W will follow up with the FAA.

Our slate for the 2016 officer elections will be:

- President - Rod Flinn
- Vice President - John Ostmeyer
- Treasurer - Dave Maine
- Secretary - Grant Wittenborn
- Chapter Reporter - Nan Funkhouser
- Member at Large - John Wittenborn

IAC 15 Meeting Minutes: 12/05/2015

Submitted by Dave Maine

We met at Miami County Airport for breakfast at 9:30am. Attendees included John and Bev Wittenborn, and Dave Maine.

John reported that his new canopy is on, and his tail feather is at the Pitts factory for recovering.

We discussed the officer elections for 2016. Rod Flinn declined the nomination, because he is out of town too much to be effective as President. Dave reported that Lee had turned the books over to Dave, for the Treasurer's job.

Dave will work on filling out the Chapter paperwork for IAC.

John W. will work on getting Dave authority to post updates on the IAC 15 website.

The IXD box waiver is signed by the FAA, so we have it, but it appears that we will just have to live with the FAA's arbitrary alterations. John W. is not confident that we will have hanger space available on the West side of IXD for a contest in 2016, so we may need to consider another location for the next Barnstormer contest.

## ***IN MEMORIAM***

### **WINONA MAY (MORRISON) CRITES**

Lee Crites, founding member of Chapter 15 IAC, who has seen more of the "Good Old Days" than the rest of us put together, lost his lifelong companion and wife on December 16<sup>th</sup>. We are truly sorry for your loss Lee, and hope you find comfort through this tough time.

### **Submitted by Rod Flinn**

Two of our Chapter 15 members competed in the Spring Opener hosted by the Wichita Chapter IAC 119. The contest was previously postponed due to weather, and severe thunderstorms again plagued the contest on registration/practice day.

Dave Maine and Rod Flinn flew to Newton, KS to compete in the Sportsman

category. Weather conditions the day of the contest were challenging, with winds aloft blowing from the south at over 30 mph. The contest director mentioned in the briefing that due to the brisk winds aloft that a spotter would be in place in McPherson, 30 miles away, in case any wayward competitors failed to recognize they had been blown out of the box.

The IAC 15 team made an exceptional showing, taking 2 of the top 4 spots. Dave Maine won Sportsman in his Pitts S2B, and Rod Flinn placed a respectable fourth in his Skybolt.

Congratulations to both competitors for their success.



Submitted by Nan Funkhouser

I travelled to Newton, KS on Saturday October 10 to support chapter members Dave Maine and Rod Flinn, and to volunteer for Wichita Chapter IAC 119. The contest was so well run that there was nothing for me to do but sit back and enjoy the flying, which I did with great appreciation! The Air Force Glider Team was in attendance Z

and contributed greatly to the success and beauty of the flying that day. Glider flights were interspersed with the power flights and the contest proceeded quickly with a lot of flights being flown. Everything about this contest was top quality and I will go back!



See anyone you know?



The Line-Up





I love this plane!

*NAME THIS AIRPORT!*



I know one IAC Chapter 15 member will recognize these unique hangars- a Quonset hut design which might hint at the era they were built- you know who you are so fill us in on the history of this wonderful little flying field! Answers will appear in the next newsletter.

*AS PROMISED EARLIER*

*‘TWEEN EARTH AND SUN  
THE STORY OF R.B. MAINE  
by R.B. MAINE*

**“Tween Earth and Sun”  
A 70 Year Journal of Aviation Memories, from Mid 1930s to 2005**

R.B. Maine  
Oscoda, Missouri

#### Dedication

This journal is dedicated to my loving wife, Elizabeth, who for almost 56 years has stuck by me through thick and thin. Without her love, patience, and her encouragement I would have failed long ago. Truly she has been the "Wind Beneath my Wings."

And it is also dedicated to my Lord, who has spared me more times than I know. All I can say is "Thank You!" It truly has been a memorable flight.

And I am not forgetting son Kevin who, more than anyone, is responsible for my taking the time to write this all up before it is forgotten and also son Dave, who "relit my fire."

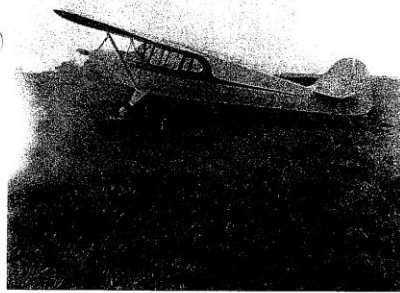




Passed Skyhawk Topka, Ks.  
owner in R seat, checking out the owner

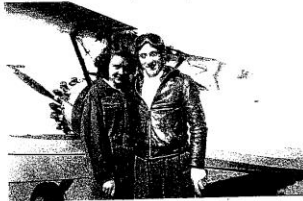


Lib- R. P. Parsonage, Morning Sun, Ia. 1946  
Pages 6, 7, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 19, & 22

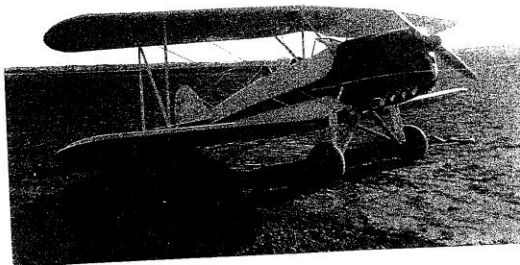


L-2 Taylorcraft

Pages 13, 18, & 19



Stearman P. 7 Sterling, Ks.



Great Lakes Topeka, Ks

Pages 6, 13, 15, 16, & 17



Navy Port Hueneme, Calif.

Pages 4 & 5



Paspod Skylark P. 14 & 15

Topeka, Ks.

JUNE 1957



Avid Clip Wing P. 25 May '99



Stits Pages 13, 21, 22, 23, & 24 June '71  
(Ready for delivery flight to Davenport, Ia to new owner)

“They Shall Mount Up with Wings as Eagles”  
Isaiah 40:31

The above verse is centrally located on the instrument panel of my Avid clip wing N47MK.

When son Kevin, who works for Beech Aircraft suggested that I record the details of my almost 60 years in aviation my first thought was “no way” for several reasons: 1) too much time has elapsed and it would be too easy to unknowingly exaggerate otherwise mundane experiences. 2) it might appear to be close to bragging 3) I don’t have the time or writing ability to put down an accurate and clear/concise record covering so many years 4) no one but the immediate family would be interested anyway and besides they probably know most of it already.

But as I thought about my own father and grandfather, how I wish that they had put down their stories and experiences which would in my mind far exceed anything I might contribute.

Be that as it may, here goes. Much comes from 3 pilot logbooks running from April '46 to the present and covering some 1600 hrs in 27 models of light aircraft. It includes 4 forced landings, 1 in which I was only a Pax (passenger). Other portions come from old job resumes and an admittedly weak memory plus some help from my wife and brother Don.

My first inkling of possible things to come occurred while in grade school, back in the 30s. Planes were a great rarity and whenever I would hear a mail plane at night winging over with its wing lights flashing (open cockpit biplanes) I would stand in awe. My heroes were WWI aces, race pilots such as Col. Roscoe Turner (I would later meet him in person) and movie and screen and pulp magazine pilots. I built balsa wood models, collected pictures and often wore a helmet and goggles in winter. I remember the first plane I ever saw close up, a biplane that landed in a pasture south of town. Half of the town must have come out to see it.

A few years later when I was about 14, a pal and I (who later bought a plane) wrote Spartan School of Aviation in Tulsa, Oklahoma thinking they would send some pictures. To our embarrassment

and my dad's exasperation they sent a man clear from Tulsa to interview two prospective students. (We had slightly exaggerated our ages.) Years later I made up for it by attending their school but I am getting ahead of the story. Also, little did we know that both of us would someday learn to fly.

One of my fond boyhood memories was of my cousin Bill Herrick. He was one of the early wanna be aircraft homebuilders. He built or partially built something resembling a Baby Ace, probably from the drawings in the *Popular Mechanics Magazine*. He built just the fuselage, full-size, of wood and muslin. He later learned to fly under the G.I. Bill the same as many of the rest of us. He later stood my Aeronca L-3 or maybe the TAC on its nose trying to land in a too short field. But again I am getting ahead of the story.

All aviation thoughts were put on hold by the war. By 1943 it was two years old and I and several other 17 year old buddies were anxious to get into it. Three cousins, Bill Herrick, Billie Main, and his sister Cleo were already in it as were several of my friends. We knew if we waited till we were 18 we would be drafted, probably into the Army. Personally I leaned towards the Navy--travel, a dry bed and regular meals inside. Not only that but I liked the Navy uniform and had never seen any water larger than the Mississippi. Also, for some reason, I liked destroyers and the recruiting posters showing a sailor hefting a 5" cannon shell was the ultimate. So Dad signed the form (needed if not yet 18) and off I went never having been any further from home than Des Moines on a high school band trip.

I include my service history not because I contributed anything to the war effort but because it's important as to how things worked out later. Without that, I probably would never have gotten into aviation and may not have met Lib.

Boot camp was in Farragut, Idaho in December and was the coldest most miserable months I ever spent. Our clothing was not adequate for the cold and we spent a good bit of time outside. But I wanted destroyers and after completing boot camp, was qualified because of band experience and a



good set of ears (at that time) for training as a Sonar operator. Next stop, Fleet Sound School in San Diego. This almost guaranteed a berth on a Destroyer or D.E (Destroyer Escort). Training was 50% at sea aboard a converted sub chaser and 50% classroom ashore. Had I been able to finish it would have meant a 3<sup>rd</sup> class petty officer stripe. As it was, I was only a Seaman 1st Class. But it was not to be. About half through the course I came down with a high temperature and swollen joints and was diagnosed with rheumatic fever. After a couple of months in the Naval Hospital I was released for "limited duty" which turned out to be guard duty at Port Hueneme and was there till the end of the war. This was and still is the greatest disappointment of my life.

But evidently the Lord's hand was in it and I never knew it. Many of the bloodiest Pacific battles were still ahead in 1944 and 1945 and more Destroyers were lost than any other ship. Not only that but as our instructors enjoyed telling us, the sonar room was down in the lower bowels of the ship with little chance to escape if the ship was hit. Probably Naval BS but who knows. I later heard that many of the class ended up on Destroyers or similar and I often wonder if any were lost.

Anyway, I recount the preceding only to show the Lord's hand in my life and many times thereafter. I was discharged with (they said) a heart murmur and a 30% disability pension. Without this additional income I may not have been able to pursue an aviation career. Certainly my time in Service opened the door for G.I benefits, which paid the high expense of a year in Spartan as well as paying for flight instruction, both private and commercial. Not only that but it helped on a loan for our second house and further helped tip the scales for Federal employment (FAA) further down the road. The heart murmur if it ever existed has never been found in some very thorough physicals as well as flight physicals. I notified the V.A of this and they reduced it to the minimum, 10% but for some reason declined to reduce it further.

To back track, after release from the Navy I knocked around at various dead-end jobs, took an open cockpit plane ride (Myers OTW) at brother Mick's suggestion and loved it. I ended up taking several lessons in an Aeronca Champ. He already was taking lessons. This stopped when he entered the Navy, stayed 3 years and was called back for the Korean War. This opened the way for him to get his Private also, under the GI bill. Bother Gary did the same.

Along about this time more experiences began to point me towards my first love, aviation. While at the Muscatine airport I walked into their shop hangar where a mechanic was recovering a wing. The heavenly smell of the aircraft dope and the apparent ease with which he converted a wood and metal skeleton into something which would actually come alive and fly made an instant and lifelong impression on me which to date has never left. To me, a plane comes alive when it flies.

The second experience also occurred about this time. Cousin Bill Herrick located an old, basket case open cockpit biplane in a hangar in Burlington, Iowa. It was a 1929 Great Lakes Trainer, disassembled, ragged and beat up. We later learned after reviewing the log books that it was a famous plane, holding the record for the most consecutive outside loops performed by a noted stunt pilot, Tex Rankin. Bill purchased it as is for \$450 with a little help from Mick and me. We didn't realize what we had, knew nothing about FAA regulations, proper aircraft repairs, or anything else, but we had a plane! Later, tied down in the Herrick's back yard we even had the thing running. However, we soon learned that there was no way we could ever make it flyable, legally or not. So it was just stored in a barn and more-or-less forgotten. It would later play an important part in my aviation education.

The third and most important event occurred not long after discharge in December 1945, again with the Lord's leading. I went on a blind date arranged by one of Lib's close girlfriends who was dating one my ex-Navy friends. I won't say it was love at first sight, but close. Date followed date,

then she went off to college in Sterling, Kansas and I enrolled in Spartan School of Aeronautics in Tulsa.

A love affair had developed and we kept the Post Office busy with letters. One of my friends at Spartan had an ex-military Stearman biplane (they could be purchased cheaply) and eventually we flew down to visit her. I furnished the fuel, he furnished the plane. We buzzed the college dorm with the girls hanging out the windows and waving. After landing she got a ride and was the hit of the girls' dorm. I even had brought her a small size Air force flight suit. She still has it. Formal engagement followed some time after as it took almost a year to pay for the ring and I didn't feel right giving it to her if it wasn't paid for.

The year at Spartan was hard. Five 8 hour days a week for one year with only breaks for Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's, and plenty of homework. Four hours of shop a day and four hours of classroom with weekly written tests. It was particularly difficult for me as most of the students were ex-Air force mechanics who already knew the basics. It covered 6 months of airframe subjects and 6 months power plant and props. Instruments, Federal Air Regs., and related paperwork were sprinkled throughout. Final school tests were both written and practical, followed by the same administered by an FAA inspector. One home project I still remember was to draw a schematic of the complete DC-3 hydraulic system, explaining the function of all units. I was lost, never having been close to a DC-3 (or C-47). Many in the class had C-47 experience. We had a week of homework to do it and I struggled through it and got a C. (Little did I know that one day I would as a licensed mechanic actually help maintain them for the FAA.) Believe it or not I ended up passing the course with flying colors and easily passed not only the CAA (now FAA) test for the A&P but the tests for the A&P Ground Instructor as well. Again the Lord's hand was in it. Some went on and took the parachute

rigger course as well but I had passed that up as jumping a chute was unthinkable unless the plane was on fire or minus a wing.

The school was good as all the instructors were ex-military and knew their stuff. In fact, the head of the school was an ex-Air Force Captain. Engines, props, and airframes were plentiful and we ran the gamut of flying equipment to work on.

One exciting and tragic thing that happened while I was there was that an Air Force C47 took on a load of bad fuel and had a forced landing right through the airport fence crossed the road and wiped out one of Spartan's dorms. One student was killed. (I wasn't in a dorm. I was living off campus. I had experience enough close-living in the Navy.) Again the Lord's oversight.

So, armed with my new license I began to look for a job. This was easy as the country was in the middle of a post-war aviation boom. Airlines were expanding and hiring, flight schools were springing up all over and surplus planes were plentiful and cheap. Also, due to the G.I Bill, thousands of ex-GIs were signing up for flight lessons. As an example, at Tinker Airforce Base Stearmans were going for \$450, BT-13s and Fairchild PT-19s were cheaper yet and liaison/trainer types (Cubs, T-crafts, Aeroncas and Porterfields could be found for \$650.) It was the golden age of aviation and we'll never see the likes again. Spartan's bulletin board was full of ads asking for pilots and mechanics.

As my primary interest was small planes, and still is, I answered an ad from Norton Flying service in Benkelman, Nebraska for \$100/week to start, which wasn't bad in September 1947. I hopped a bus with one suitcase and a box of tools practically my total assets as had no car. I was 22 and full of dreams.

When I arrived there was no transportation so I walked the mile or so to my first job. I found the owner/operator was a middle-aged man named Sam Norton. He had an office, a shop hangar and two Piper J-3s, one of which was a sprayer. He had a full-time instructor, an ex-Air force liaison pilot

named "Hoppy" Hopper. Sam was a flight examiner. He was an odd one, living alone in a trailer with his dog, but I found him to be a very good pilot and the best natural mechanic (unlicensed) on autos and aircraft I ever saw. He claimed to be an ex-bootlegger, running rum boats to New Jersey during prohibition. Knowing him, it was believable. He had quite a few students, sprayed with the J-3 and sold flight instruction and rental with the other one. Hoppy, the instructor was a natural pilot and very good in a J-3 as later demonstrated. I immediately signed up under the G.I. Bill and began flying during off hours.

My job was to conduct 100 hour and Annual Inspections as well as minor repairs. In between I drove the spray/fuel truck and acted as a flag man while Sam sprayed. This was before automatic markers. After each spray pass I would pace a certain number of steps with the flag to act as a marker for him to line up on. Although always on the outside of the pass I still got a little spray drift each time. However, in those days no one worried about it.

My first aerobatics, if you could call it that, was as a passenger with George. George was a truck mechanic with a Private and would often rent Sam's J-3. He loved to do snap rolls as he called them. Not knowing any better I would often ride with him. Why we didn't pull the wings off I'll never know. Again the Lord was watching over me.

I finally soloed and got my Private from Sam, but prior to that while taking dual with Hoppy I experienced my first forced landing and it was my fault! I had previously changed the oil and somehow neglected to safety the oil temp bulb, which screws into the oil screen housing. A lesson I never forgot and it was instrumental in developing a caution and care attitude that has served me well ever since, during hundreds of inspections on many, many aircraft. Fortunately my instructor took over and we landed in a wheat field without damage. The engine of course required overhaul. Sam with all his character flaws didn't fire me, no doubt recalling some goofs of his own.