

Hangar Flyin'



A note from Jim Snelgrove:

In our July news letter, you saw all the good pictures of the Young Eagles and our pilots who volunteered for the event. Also, the Abilene Reporter News gave us excellent coverage with pictures. Now, we are going to let all see the score card of the flight activity. We all want to say THANK YOU to the pilots who helped these kids realize the experience of flight.

Pilot	# of kids flown
1. Russell Ueckert	18
2. Wayne McCormick	8
3. Gary Potter	18
4. Scott Koeckritz	7
5. Fred Novak	14
6. Steve West	18
7. Jim Berry	5
8. David Bradshaw	2

This is a total of 90 children... Most were brought by the organization known as Abilene Alliance for Women & Children. Many of the children would never have a chance for a plane ride if not for the generous effort of our pilots. The folks who worked on the ground and supported the efforts of our pilots were: Charlotte Rhodes, Mark Reed, Jeff Clement, Allie Clement, Harold Cannon and Dennis Patience.
Jim Snelgrove: pictures



Above: One of the aircraft Ron photographed at the Gainesville Fly-In

Flight to Gainesville

Ron Pearson

At three thousand feet MSL and a five knot tailwind I was off to the Antique Airplane Association fly-in. Gainesville, Texas was the choice for this year's gathering.

The last cross-country trip I made in an airplane had been very different from this one. A long time ago, before GPS had been invented, I flew a Luscombe 8A with a 65 hp Continental engine from Waterbury, Connecticut to Houston, Texas. I had a small cardboard box as a co-pilot. Inside was an FM radio, a very long salami, some crackers and a several sectional charts. And though this time I was armed with a hand held GPS unit that pointed confidently toward Gainesville, I still kept a sectional chart opened and handy.

The air was calm as the green hills and valleys slipped below almost unnoticed. With visibility around ten miles it was easy to keep the nose of the airplane pointed in the right direction. And with the reassurance of twenty-one hundred and fifty rpm's, forty pounds of oil pressure and one hundred-fifty degrees of oil temperature, I reached for a sandwich and settled back to watch the clouds roll by.

First thing I noticed was the shadow of my plane skirting through the treetops below. Funny how your own shadow looks from the air. I sat up straight. My shadow was going in the wrong direction. There was an airplane below me. Time to wake up and fly right. I reached for the sectional.

I know to a lot of people sectional charts seem outdated and just an expensive nuisance. As one who likes to read maps I always found them to be interesting and entertaining. The one I was carrying on this day was also informative as it warned me of the four towers ahead whose tops rose higher than my current altitude. I could see them in the distance and gave them all a wide berth.

Before long I saw a runway ahead with several airplanes buzzing around like little bees near a hive. It was Gainesville. I turned off the GPS and packed the chart away.

I overflowed the airport at four hundred feet above the traffic pattern to get a look at the wind sock and decide which way to land. Upon seeing that the mass of airplanes had chosen to land to the south I dumped some altitude and joined in behind them. I was number four or five with some safe spacing between the one directly in front of me. Several more airplanes waited patiently on the ground for their chance to take off.

I should have landed farther down the runway than I did, but because I had only a few hours in the log book since my thirty-one year hiatus from flying, I chose to land short just for safety's sake. I'm sure one or two of those guys waiting to take off were less than pleased with my lengthy taxi.

I'd made it to my first fly-in in a very long time and as the gentleman with the flag guided me to a parking spot among many other planes I smiled.

Jared Calvert was at the door as soon as my engine shut down. He had flown up the day before.

There were airplanes of all sizes and shapes parked in neat little rows with people walking up and down looking in windows and whispering to each other about how they would have done something differently or how they would love to own one just like it. A young man and his wife came to see my little airplane.

"I hear these Luscombes (he pronounced it, Loos-coomes) are hard to fly," he said.

I wanted to toss my scarf back and say in Waldo Pepper style, "Yeah, they're a handful all right," but instead I assured him that they were in fact a nice little airplane that responded well to the pilot's input. He smiled to his wife as if to say, "See, this is what I want for my birthday."



The fly-in was fun, but it was really HOT. The heat reflecting off the concrete was stifling. There was a big hanger with tables and chairs where you could register and then buy a hamburger and a drink. I have a bit of Howard Hughes in me, so I always bring my own food and water.



I walked the flight line a few times looking closely at the open cockpit planes and especially the P-40 Warhawk. As a kid I always wanted a P-40 model airplane, which we all erroneously called a "Flying Tiger."

I couldn't help but notice that a lot of airplanes were leaving and by two-thirty my little Luscombe was sitting by itself in an empty lot. Time to head home.

Jared came over and gave me a prop so I could taxi to the SS fuel pump. He also showed me how to work it. SS fuel pumps are right up there with GPS's. They didn't have either back in the 70's. But it was at the pump where I got the best news of the day. My 65 ponies were eating a modest 3.9 GPH.

After filling the tank I pushed the plane to a tie down and went inside to cool off before heading for home. Ten minutes later, Jared propped me again and I was on my way to Ranger, Texas.

It had been a good trip. The flying was fun and the people were friendly. There wasn't much to do once you walked the flight line a few times so I put this one in the logbook as a one-shot deal. Now, I hear there are some good fly-in breakfasts around these parts.

I'll let you know...



Above: Another of the aircraft Ron photographed at the Gainesville Fly-In

Caption Contest



Send your caption to Ben at benmallon1@suddenlink.net for a chance to see your words immortalized in print

Caption Contest Winner – Last Month



"I guess Charlotte was serious when she told us not to enter her airspace without approval."

Brian Carter

What Would You Like to See in Your Newsletter?

My thanks to those who have submitted photos, stories, articles and info for our newsletter. If you haven't submitted something, what are you waiting for? If you submitted something and didn't see it in the newsletter, call or email me. I probably forgot or lost it somewhere, and a reminder from you will help. So please send articles, stories, photos, etc. I need your ideas as well. THANK YOU. Please send to my email address: benmallon1@suddenlink.net