

MONTANA PILOTS' ASSOCIATION



INCORPORATED

Heading Bug

November/December 2006

Membership Sweepstakes

The **Montana Pilots' Association** started a Membership Sweepstakes drive that will run Oct. 1 to March 1 to increase the association's membership. The sweepstakes drawing will be held at the Montana Aviation Conference, March 3, in Missoula. Grand prize is a hand-held Garmin 96C

GPS along with numerous other prizes. You do not need to be present to win the Garmin GPS but do need to be present for some of the other prizes.



Each renewing member, each new member and each current member who sponsors a new member, will have their name entered in the drawing. To earn an extra chance in the sweepstakes drawing make sure to include your name as the sponsoring member on a new member's

application. The more new members sponsored the more chances to win.

To obtain a new membership application contact a hangar officer, clip/print the application from this issue of the *Heading Bug* or print out a copy from the Membership Application link on the MPA Web site www.montanapilots.org

MPA Hangars are being asked to help the membership drive by coming up with additional prizes.

aviation humor

"Mankind has a perfect record in aviation; we never left one up there!"

president's message:

Greetings fellow Montana aviators,

The year is rapidly drawing to a close. The winter flying season is upon us. Hopefully many of you will be able to continue flying through the winter. I realize some put their airplane away during the cold months of winter, but the extra performance in the cold air and the winter wonderland scenery is an enjoyable reason to fly during the winter.

I encourage you to participate in the MPA membership drive and have a friend join. If you are interested in serving on a committee or serving as a board member, please let me know at ace1dahl@yahoo.com.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Russell Dahl
President MPA



Photo by Steve Stanley

calendar of events

2006

Dec. 12—Southwest Montana Hangar Christmas Party—6:30 p.m. at Ruby Valley Aviation, Twin Bridges—RSVP to Kendra Horn, 684-5335 or kendra@rubyvalleyaviation.com

Dec. 15—Mission Valley Hangar and EAA Chapter 1122 Christmas party at Ninepipes Lodge—no-host bar at 6 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m.—RSVP Mauri Morin at maurv8@bresnan.net

Dec. 25—**Christmas**

2007

Jan. 6—50th Anniversary, Planes of Fame Museum—Chino, Calif.

Jan. 19—Deadline for Jan/Feb *Heading Bug*

March 1-3—Montana Aviation Conference—Missoula

March 23—Deadline for March/April *Heading Bug*

Apr. 17-23—Sun 'n Fun—Lakeland, Fla.

May 28—Memorial Day

May 25—Deadline for May/June *Heading Bug*



June 23—High Country Warbirds—Valle, Ariz.

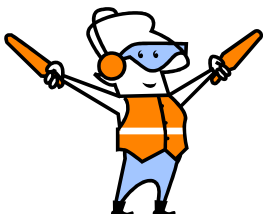
Aug. 18—Ninth Annual Polson Fly-In—Polson (8S1)

One-click for statewide weather

Ever wish for an easy way to see what the weather is across Montana without having to type numerous airport identifiers on the FAA weather sites? That wish has now come true, weather panels have been added to each of the 17 hangars on the Hangar & Activity Report page on the MPA Web site (<http://www.montanapilots.org/mpaactiv.html>). The weather panels are supplied by WeatherUnderground for the airport or nearest weather reporting facility to each of the MPA Hangars. In the case of Plains, the weather reporting station chosen by WeatherUnderground was Mullen Pass, which is located at 6000 feet and is not indicative of the actual weather at Plains. The compromise was to choose Thompson Falls, which is closer, near the same elevation and situated near the Clark Fork River. For the Southwest Hangar a choice had to be made between Butte and Dillon and Dillon won the flip. The WeatherUnderground panel, like the ones on the Web site, is pictured below. It shows when the weather was last updated, the sky condition, humidity, visibility, wind and temperature. Click on the weather panel and find the latest forecasts for the reporting station plus access to local and regional radar. One click on the Hangar & Activity page of the MPA Web site will allow you to see the weather across Montana.

17. Vigilante Hangar—Helena

	Helena Regional, MT Clear Humidity: 47% Visibility: 10 miles Wind: South at 1.3 mph		Updated: 1:53 PM 55 °F <small>click for forecast</small>
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The *Heading Bug* is available on the MPA Web site www.montanapilots.org along with several years of back copies. If there is a favorite article you want to read again it is now available online by going to the Web site and clicking on Newsletter.



Central Montana Hangar—Make Lewistown's new pilots' lounge your next stop...for an hour or a night! Pilots traveling to, or through, central Montana now have a great place to check the weather, wait out a squall or grab a cup of coffee with fellow pilots on Saturday mornings. Earlier this year, a group of Central Hangar MPA members took on the challenge of updating the former FAA Weather Station with the goal of turning it into first-class pilots' lounge. Located about half way between Newton Aviation and the public airline terminal, the lounge features high-speed Internet access from Tein Net (local ISP), flight planning space, a restroom, refreshments and

even has comfortable accommodations for pilots grounded due to bad weather. The MPA members' primary goal was "freshening up" the historic weather station without destroying or altering its original features. Many of the charts and tools that were in place when the facility was in use, remain today...a true step back in time for the frequent visitors who remember stepping inside for weather and flight planning assistance.



Tim Robertson's daughter Nadja in front of the LWT pilot lounge.



Local MPA members are attempting to put the place to good use by serving coffee and donuts most Saturday mornings for local and visiting pilots. MPA members and their guests are always welcome, whether for a few hours on Saturday morning or for a longer stay while traveling to or through the area. So, the next time you're in the area, fill up your tank at Newton Aviation then stop over for a visit at the nicest new pilots' lounge in Montana! *article and photos by Tim Robertson*

Mission Valley Hangar— In September, Sparky Imeson was in Polson while Steen Aviation installed a Sportsman STOL kit on his C-180, and he presented his mountain flying class to the Hangar. The October meeting was a potluck social at the Leon Club in Charlo with Chuck Jarecki presenting his slide show on the flight he and his wife, Penny, made to Central America. The November meeting was canceled because it was too close to Thanksgiving and the December meeting will be the Christmas Party and dinner at Ninepipes Lodge on Dec. 15. *by Mauri Morin*

Miles City Hangar—Hello from Miles City. It has been very quiet here this year. We had our annual Fly-In at Sunday Creek the first Saturday in June, then we had the annual Fly-In planned for our place at Rock Springs but the weather did not co-operate so now we will have a meeting in December to try and pick a new president and vice-president. Then we will start planning for 2007, and hopefully the weather will help us through out the year. *by Barb Hirsh*

Sanders County Hangar— The Plains Airport (S34) is now open with a new paved runway, 75 feet wide by 4700 feet long and a new name. The grand opening was attended by over 70 planes of all vintages. Everyone that came seemed to have a great time. Breakfast and lunch were served. The new airport was dedicated to Penn Stohr. The name of the airport will be Plains Airport, Penn Stohr Field. The Spring Creek Kids helped out a lot with the event.

The Super AWOS is up and running. Three Clicks will get you the automated airport report. Four Clicks and the station will respond with "radio check", the station will record what you say and send it back out to you. Pretty neat. Also the lights are radio controlled. Three, five or seven clicks. *by Marlin Cooper*

Vigilante Hangar—Thanks to the MPA Recreational Airstrip Fund the Townsend airport now has a Ramada. The camping area is now complete with a covered picnic table and Bar-B-Q. You'll have to come and grill your steaks and watch the planes land. *by Neil Salmi*



Townsend pilot lounge and picnic area

Plains dedicates a new runway and a new name, Penn Stohr Field

article and photos by Art Lindstrom

Back in September Dan Lilja e-mailed me information on the Oct. 7 dedication of the new Plains airport and requested I put it on the calendars of the *Heading Bug* and the MPA Web site. Shortly thereafter I flew into Twin Falls, Idaho and went into the terminal building for dinner. The terminal had a wall dedicated to the Idaho Aviation Hall of Fame complete with their pictures. I looked over the pictures of the Hall of Fame members and came across Penn Stohr, who is also a member of the Montana Museum of Backcountry Flying Hall of Fame.

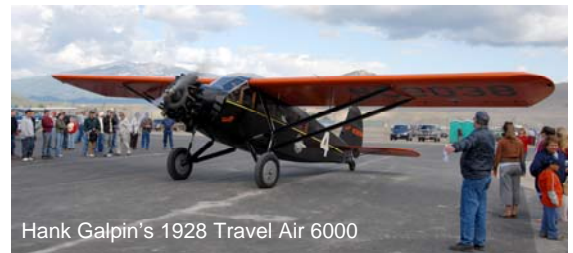


During the airport dedication: left to right-Rev. Bob Nagy, Clark Fork Valley Hospital CEO Margo Harrison, Gov. Brian Schweitzer, airport manager Randy Garrison and holding the new airport sign are Sanders County Commissioners Carol Brooker and Gail Patton

During dinner I reminisced about Stohr. I had grown up a few blocks away from Hale Field in Missoula and as a kid rode my bike over to the airport and hung around Johnson Flying Service watching the airplanes and listening to the pilots and mechanics. I remember Penn, because even as a young kid it was obvious from the way the people treated him and talked to him he was a mountain of a man among the pilots and mechanics. I also remembered the pictures and stories of his growing up and starting to fly in Plains. Upon my return to Montana I e-mailed Dan with the recommendation that since Plains was dedicating a new airport they should name it after Penn Stohr. I was surprised to learn there was a group of people, being led by Millar Bryce, who wanted the airport to be named Penn Stohr Field. Bryce, now living in Missoula was very active or as Carol Brooker, Sanders County Commissioner, said at the dedication, very persistent in pushing for the naming. Millar was able to win over the county commissioners and airport board and the airport became Penn Stohr Field.

Good weather brought 77 airplanes and two helicopters to enjoy the pancake breakfast and lunch cooked by the Plains/Paradise Chamber of Commerce. All pilots flying in were given a set of Penn Stohr Field airplane chocks with the date of the dedication. Parking and airplane ground control was handled by the Spring Creek Lodge Academy and Plains High School students.

Hank Galpin flew his 1928 Travel Air 6000 down from Kalispell, an old Johnson Flying Service airplane he had rebuilt. The Travel Air had been flown by Penn Stohr. Stohr had flown a similar Travel Air on skis to rescue the crew of a Army Air Corp B-23 that crashed in the Idaho backcountry in the winter. Stohr was killed in the crash of a Ford Tri-Motor near Townsend in 1957.



Hank Galpin's 1928 Travel Air 6000



Prior to the dedication Minuteman Aviation pilot Doug Hodges put on a demonstration of the Air Tractor 802 Single Engine Air Tanker (SEAT) by dropping 800 gallons of water on the airport. Minuteman operates the SEAT from Penn Stohr Field on a USFS contract. The longer paved runway will allow the SEAT to depart on summer days fully loaded rather than the reduced loads to safely fly from the old shorter runway.

The dedication ceremonies capped a two-year construction project that took five years to plan and finance. JTL Group was the contractor and Robert

Peccia and Associates engineered the project.

Governor Brian Schweitzer flew in to help dedicate the airport. Trish McKenna, Montana Aeronautics Board Chairperson, was to have accompanied the Governor but rain and weather around Helena and Bozeman kept her Super Cub grounded. Randy Garrison, airport manager was the MC for the dedication. Clark Fork Valley Hospital CEO, Margo Harrison explained how the new airport will allow air ambulances to serve the area. Governor Schweitzer told of how the airport could open the door to business opportunities with an expanding economy he sees coming from boosting clean energy production such as wind power and clean coal.



Gov. Brian Schweitzer, Carol Brooker and Gail Patton cut the ribbon officially opening Penn Stohr Field

Willis Penn Stohr (Penn), who is recognized as one of the finest backcountry pilots in aviation, began his career in Plains, Montana. His interest in flying and the development of aviation in Plains evolved together as Stohr became the first pilot and operator of an airplane in the small railroad community in 1926. Stohr learned to fly with Nick Mamer of Mamer Flying School at Felts Field in Spokane, Wash. Soon after he soloed he wanted to buy an airplane and began his inquiry with Mamer who at the time was selling Hisso Eagle Rocks. Stohr and Mamer took a new Eagle Rock on a test flight Aug. 22, 1926, which ended in disaster. The aircraft went into a flat spin at 2000 feet, oddly enough power lines softened the crash and the two were able to get out before the craft burned. Needless to say, Stohr did not buy the new Eagle Rock. However, several days later he purchased an OX 5 Swallow from Mamer that became the first airplane in Plains. With no designated place to land Stohr used the smoothest street in town as his runway, Main Street.



Stohr, who moved to Plains in 1905 at the age of two with his father and two brothers, used his hometown as his base of operations. On his time off, Stohr began barnstorming to nearby towns and made numerous trips to see his wife, Alma Garber, also of Plains, while she was attending the University of Montana in Missoula. Alma always knew when he was coming to visit, not from the sound of the airplane, but from the large siren mounted on the side of the cockpit. The two started a family in 1929 when their first son, Dan, was born. Routinely the Stohr family took to the skies each weekend barnstorming to various communities such as Kellogg, Wallace, Kalispell, Hot Springs and Superior, giving people an up-close look at an airplane or their first ride as advertised by the slogan painted on the fuselage, "A penny a pound."

Honoring his pioneering interest and flying abilities, Stohr was invited to the Helena air show to meet and escort Charles Lindbergh who was on his triumphal tour of America after his famous transatlantic crossing. On Sept. 6, 1927, Stohr and friend K. Paul represented Plains and flew with several other Montana pilots escorting Lindbergh to Missoula where they circled the town and then flew him part way to Spokane.



In 1933 Stohr upgraded his airplane to an OX 5 Waco he bought from Plains dentist, Dr. Al Phelps, the only catch was the plane had been wrecked. Stohr managed to transport the aircraft to a lean-to he built next to his father's shop (still standing today) and began the necessary repairs. He received help from Alma who used her sewing skills to mend the wing fabric and also benefited from his father's wood working abilities in the shop next door. At the time, Stohr drove truck for Plains Flour Mill delivering to the neighboring towns of Hot Springs and Superior. The company helped sponsor Stohr with the agreement he paint the company's name on the side of the plane for some free advertising. With the neat clean lettering added to the plane's fuselage it was not long before Stohr taxied the Waco OX 5 to an updated runway location on the north side of town near his home on Rittenour Street. The year 1933 not only brought Stohr a new plane, but he also became the first pilot hired by the well-known Johnson Flying Service in Missoula. Although

not a full-time position, it was a step toward making aviation a full-time job, which was not too common in the 1930s, especially in Plains.

Events like the Lindbergh fly-in and the expansion of air service such as Johnson Flying Service helped promote the advancement of aviation and inspired others in Plains to take up the sport of flying. With growing interest into the early 1930s Stohr instigated the building of a permanent airport on the west side of town at its current location. At this airport, Stohr shared his love and enthusiasm for flying by selling airplane rides and flying lessons. Stohr not only brought the new technological advancement of aviation to Plains, but also created the foundation for the community to expand upon it. His humble beginnings in Plains eventually led him to become one of the most authoritative and experienced figures in backcountry flying. Both the Montana and Idaho Aviation Halls of Fame recognize his illustrious flying career starting with his early experiences in Plains and later with Johnson Flying Service. *by Penn Stohr Jr.*

The MPA Recreational Airstrip Committee and the Recreational Aviation Foundation (RAF) are working on amending Montana's recreational use statute to specifically include private airstrips. Most other recreational uses of private land are enumerated in the current law.

The RAF received a grant from the Alfred Wolfe Foundation to hire a UM law student to research the various states' recreational use statutes to see if aviation was included. Only Idaho was. The student, under the guidance of one of his professors, researched the efficacy of Montana's statute and drafted an amendment to the Montana law.

John Bruggeman and Janna Taylor have agreed to sponsor the bill (letter I wrote to Janna attached for reference). Similar letters are going out to other legislators. It will be up to MPA to push this through the legislature next year. Joe Roberts will be the lead for MPA. MPA members need to contact their respective legislators and get them on board. *by Chuck Jarecki, MPA Western Director*

Editors note—Jarecki's letter to Janna Taylor, Montana case law interpreting Montana Recreational Use Statute, Idaho's amended Recreational Use Statute and the draft amendment to the Montana Recreational Use Statute can be found on the Recreational Airstrip page of the MPA Web site

Folks: Below is a link to the state of Montana's upcoming plan on tourism (Montana Strategic Tourism Plan). Clearly aviation (general and backcountry) should be a cornerstone of this new plan. The only way for us to be a player is to show up. I just found out about this today (Nov. 21) and was hoping that we could get on this. I missed the Bozeman meeting but plan to attend at least one of the remaining ones. This should not be like USFS meetings but rather we should be getting our oar in the tourism water. I know from personal conversations as well as discussions with Travel Montana they do not see us on their radar screen just yet. Let's change that in a positive way. Pass it on and try to attend. What we need to do is to get a message out with some of the following points but not limited to.

- General Aviation is a part of Montana
- Recreational Aviation is an unrecognized part of tourism.
- We need to invest in recreational facilities at airports in Montana such as camping facilities. Just like we do for cars, motorcycles boaters, horse back folks, mountain bikers, snowmobilers, etc-etc-etc.

We need to coordinate flying and existing community events. Many people who are otherwise considered "out of the area" are pilots within an easy day's flying of Montana. The state tourism folks need to know who they are and market to them. Montana Strategic Tourism Plan Web page—<http://travelmontana.mt.gov/2008StrategicPlan/>
by John McKenna, Recreational Airstrip Committee Co-chair

Hi All, today (Sunday, Nov. 19) Fred Sweet and I took a little trip out to the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument to check on the airstrips. I had been out there on Oct. 24 and with all the moisture had thought that a couple of the strips had been vandalized by vehicle traffic. We could not find any terrible damage today. The attached picture shows very wide vehicle tracks, but not deeply rutted as I had feared. On Left Coulee, there appeared to be some deep ruts along the south edge in one area, but I didn't get a good picture and we did not land on that strip. We also ran into a couple of guys from Bozeman at Knox Ridge in a 206, we had a nice little visit with them. *by JC Kantorowicz, GTF Hangar Pres.*



FAA chimes in on ethanol in fuel— The FAA has issued a [special airworthiness information bulletin \(SAIB\)](#) explaining the hazards posed to aircraft operation with automotive fuels that contain alcohol. EAA and other aviation groups have warned about the increased use of ethanol in fuels. The alcohol is a substitute for chemical oxygenates MTBE and ETBE that are linked to environmental concerns. But while ethanol may be safer for the environment, it's toxic to airplane engines and the FAA says that if you can't find alcohol-free mogas for your STC'd aircraft engine, you'll have to switch back to 100LL. Alcohol increases the risk of vapor lock and can also introduce water into the fuel system as it cools at higher altitudes. It's also corrosive to rubber seals used in aircraft fuel systems and reduces the amount of power available from the fuel. Although oil companies are required to prominently label their fuels that contain alcohol, if there's any doubt about its presence, the bulletin includes a simple test that anyone can perform to determine if there is alcohol in fuel.

From Young Eagle to First Officer

Former Young Eagle Michele Ewing is living her dream as a pilot for Horizon Air, pursuing a passion that began in high school and lifted off with the help of the EAA Young Eagles program. Ewing's interest in aviation started the summer before high school, when her family visited Washington D.C. She loved the National Air and Space Museum and wanted to be a Navy fighter pilot. During Ewing's junior year of high school, she applied to all branches of the military, but reluctantly was rejected due to a childhood injury. With that news, she started looking for colleges with great aviation programs.

At the same time, Ewing's father, a state employee, introduced her to Jeanne McPherson. Jeanne suggested attending an FAA sponsored ACE camp, which introduces young people to all types of aviation careers. "I went

up in a hot air balloon, attended wilderness survival training and went on my EAA Young Eagles flight. I was hooked, and Jeanne did all she could to help feed my love of aviation until I moved away to college," Ewing said. McPherson would travel around Montana conducting EAA Young Eagle flights with Ewing alongside, supporting her dream until she entered her first year of college at the Helena (Mont.) Community College completing general education credits while living at home.

During the fall of 1998, Ewing moved to Grand Forks, N.D., to attend the University of North Dakota, receiving a \$500 scholarship from the MPA. By May 2001, after finishing her classes and flying year-round, Ewing obtained a Bachelors degree in Business, majoring in Aviation Management and had earned her Certificated Flight Instructor (CFI) certificate as well.

Ewing later moved to Phoenix, Ariz., with her husband and started instructing for the University of North Dakota Aerospace Foundation while earning her Certificated Flight Instructor Instrument (CFII) and Multi-Engine Instructor (MEI) certificates. "I learned so much from my students and had a great time in Arizona," Ewing said.

In March 2004, Piedmont Airlines hired Ewing as a first officer where she stayed for about a year, commuting to Roanoke, Va., flying the DeHavilland Dash-8. Ewing is currently a first officer flying a Dash-8 400 with Horizon Air since April 2005.

"I was so happy at Horizon that my husband and I moved to Portland, Ore., where I am based. I get to fly to Montana regularly and enjoy seeing my family often," Ewing said. She has considered working for a major airline, but hasn't set her sights on any one in particular seeing as though she loves flying in and out of Montana.

"I have received a lot of help along the way from many sources. I would credit my parents and Jeanne with encouraging me that my dream career was possible. The EAA Young Eagles flight was amazing. I hope millions more kids will get the joy of experiencing their first flight."



MONTANA PILOTS' ASSOCIATION - Membership Application Form

Name: _____ Mailing Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____ Home Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Please select a local Hangar (chapter): ' Central (Lewistown) ' Colstrip ' Five Valleys (Missoula)
' Flathead (Kalispell) ' Gallatin Valley ' Glacier (Cutbank) ' Glendive ' Great Falls ' Miles City
' Mission Valley (Polson, Ronan & St. Ignatius) ' Sanders County (Plains) ' North Central (Havre)
' South Central (Billings) ' Southwest (Dillon, Butte & Twin Bridges) ' Valley (Glasgow) ' Vigilante (Helena)
' Member At Large

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES (JAN – DEC)

Regular Member (pilot)	' \$25	Household Membership (2 Regular Members)	' \$45
Associate Member (not soloed)	' \$15	Family Membership (1 Regular and 1 Associate)	' \$35
Montana 1st Solo Student Pilot '1 st year free			

Make check payable to: Montana Pilots' Association , Inc.

Mail to: Geanette Cebulski, Sec/Treas, P. O. Box 1178, Seeley Lake, MT 59868-1178

Total \$ _____

Sponsoring member _____

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We're on the Web at <http://montanapilots.org>