

Airport Advisor

March 2005

CLARE MUNICIPAL AIRPORT - 48D

Volume 52

Edited by Richard Acker

Jeff Wilkerson Solos



WOW! What a rush! That was amazing!

You would think those were the comments and emotions Jeff Wilkerson was experiencing during his first solo flight. He probably did feel that way, but those thoughts were actually from Dick Acker, his Certified Flight Instructor. Jeff is the first student Dick signed off for solo flight since getting his C.F.I. rating last November.

Jeff has wanted to be a pilot for many years. On March 4, 2005, Jeff realized part of that dream by making his first solo flight. If you haven't done it, it is not easy to understand the feelings and emotions involved in that first solo.

There is a certain amount of self-doubt when the flight instructor steps out of the airplane. After you "give it the gas" and take off you think, "Wow, I did it." Then when you have climbed to pattern altitude and are on down wind and approaching to land, you suddenly realize that you are in an airplane, one thousand feet up, and the only one who can get it back on the ground is YOU! After the wheels touch the ground it still takes time for your emotions to get back down to earth.

Jeff made it back down and is now working on his private license. Good job, Jeff!

New Pilot License Available

The FAA apparently has decided that they made an error in judgment when they started using Social Security numbers for pilot license numbers. In an attempt to correct this situation, you can have a replacement license issued without your SSN, for only the cost of a postage stamp. This will be the new style, plastic laminated, with a picture of the Wright Flyer embossed in the background.

If you choose to get a new license, the required form can be downloaded at:

www.registry.faa.gov/docs/SSN_Change.pdf

This only applies if your current license has your SSN on it.

Support General Aviation

As someone interested in aviation, you have a couple of choices. You can sit at home and grumble about how general aviation is going down hill and isn't as much fun as it used to be, or you can look around and find some really great fun and interesting things to do this summer. All it takes is a commitment by you to support some of the activities that are happening all around you.

For instance, there are three great events coming up this year that deserve your attention.

May 13-15—Pinch Hitter Course—What happens if the pilot becomes incapacitated during flight? In one weekend your flying partner will learn to navigate, communicate and land the airplane.

Aug 12-14—SMALL Rally—How good are you at navigating and finding airports. You are pretty good, huh? Now try it without your GPS, VOR, Loran, ADF, or anything but the compass, a watch and a chart. If you haven't flown this event, it is time to try. Great fun and experience.

Sep 9-11—Michigan Air Tour—Join a group of aviators as they stop at several airports and testify to the local population as to the true value of their airport. This event is a wonderful way to support aviation and help keep small airports open and available for everyone.

For information on these activities call: 989-386-0445

The Environment Thanks You

Late last fall, in a continuing effort to improve the pilot services at the Clare Municipal Airport, an environmentally safe (read "expensive") gas can was placed at the aircraft fueling station. The purpose and intent of the can is to have a place to dump the two or three ounces of fuel pilots drain from the airplane fuel tanks when they check for contamination. For many years, it was the practice to simply toss the gas on the ground.

Being totally candid, I really didn't think it would be used very much. I was pretty sure most would ignore the can and continue to fling the fuel on the pavement. Boy, was I wrong!

While in the process of doing the monthly fuel usage and getting the readings from the pump, I happened to look in the dump can. It was nearly full! That tells me the pilots using the fuel system at Clare are being proactive about protecting the environment. Please keep up the good work. The future generations thank you.

Experience is that marvelous thing that enables you to recognize a mistake when you make it, again.

Let It Melt, Let It Melt, Let It Melt



It doesn't take much to entertain a bunch of aviation folks trying to break out of the winter doldrums.

Last week Roger Raycraft was hanging around the terminal building, looking out across the airplane parking ramp. On the far side was a large pile of snow, left over from the great snow plowing job done by the Clare City Department of Public Works this past winter. When they cleared the ramp area, they pushed it to the far side and piled it up. Roger looked at the pile of snow and said, "We ought to stick a pole in the snow and see how long it takes for the snow to melt, before the stick hits the ground." Well, it wasn't long before there was a stick in the snow.

Soon folks started guessing as to the day it would fall. It was decided if betting were legal we could place a wager and see who would come the closest. As we all know, betting is not legal, but, it was decided we could place a donation in a bucket and when the stick fell the funds could be donated to the person with the closest guess.

Unfortunately, with warm spring days coming, there wasn't enough time to properly advertise the guessing game. Participants pretty much found out about it by word of mouth. The cutoff date for guessing was set at March 30 because it looked like it might fall soon after that date. As of this writing there is still a couple of feet out there. Next month you can read about the results.

Hopefully some good flying weather will arrive soon so the aviators will have something to do to take up their time.

Deer — Here, There, Everywhere

It is that time of year when the local deer population is coming out of winter habitat and looking for food to fill their winter starved stomachs.

Please be careful when landing or departing from the airport runways. Looking back as far as possible, there is no record of any deer-airplane accident at the Clare Municipal airport. Let's try to keep it that way.

There has been significant thought given to the problem, but no workable solution has been determined thus far. Until one is found everyone must be extra wary of the danger that exists.

The only good news is that the deer seem to pay little attention to airplanes on the runway. They do not panic and run if they are standing in place. However, if they are already moving they might cross the runway. BE CAREFUL!

Canada Fly-Out Postponed

Last month it was announced that we were planning a fly-out to London, Ontario, Canada in April. Everything was going as planned until it was determined that the date picked for the trip was right in the middle of the Sun 'n Fun event at Lakeland, Florida.

Several folks indicated a desire to make the trip to Canada, however, plans had already been made to attend the 31st annual spring celebration of flight at Sun 'n Fun.

Spring in Florida vs. spring in Canada, hmmm? Pretty tough competition. Would you rather go to Florida and see a lot of airplanes, or go to Canada and see — well I guess, see a lot of Canada.

A new date has not yet been chosen, but it will be at least a month away and the new date will be posted in next month's *ADVISOR*.

There is good news regarding the Radio Station Operators Permit. The official word from Air Transport Canada (the equivalent of the Federal Aviation Administration here in the U.S.) is that we don't need it to fly into Canada.

Several years ago the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) required anyone, transmitting signals over "their" air-waves, to possess a permit for the transmitter. Thus every airplane with a transmitting radio had to have one. Surprisingly, forty years ago perhaps only half of the small general aviation airplanes had radios.

All was fine-and-dandy until the fad of citizen band (CB) radios came on the scene. At first, the FCC tried to require every CB to have a permit. The popularity of the CB radio hit the FCC like a tsunami. Almost every car and truck on the highway wanted to transmit on their radio. The FCC couldn't handle the load and couldn't provide regulation. So they simply "looked the other way" and stopped requiring people using CB radios to have a permit to operate them.

It wasn't long before the aviation industry came to the logical conclusion that if the CB radios didn't need a permit then airplanes shouldn't have to have one either. The FCC agreed and removed the requirement. Aircraft registered in Canada, however, are still required to have a permit to use a transmitting radio. The official information from Air Transport Canada is that if your airplane is registered in the United States, you are operating under U.S. rules and therefore are not required to have a radio permit.

Permits are available from the FCC if you really want to have one. They cost about \$100 and take several weeks to process and mail.

Editorial

The opinions expressed in this publication are the opinion and sole responsibility of the editor.

Comments should be addressed to: Richard Acker, 202 West 5th Street, Clare, MI 48617, Phone 989-386-0445.