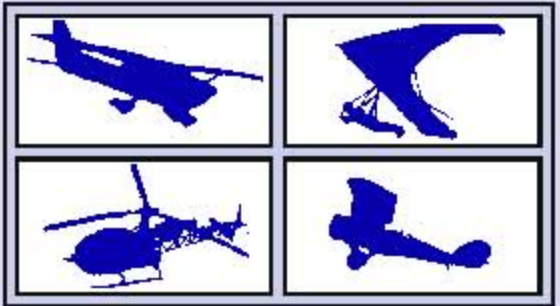


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Oklahoma Aviator



Vol 18, No 11

Your window to Oklahoma Aviation...Past, Present, Future

November 2000

Ragozzino Sets Round-the-World Record

WILEY POST AIRPORT, BETHANY - On November 17, 2000 at 3:10 PM, Oklahoma native Robert Ragozzino, captured the

hearts of airplane enthusiasts by completing his round-the-world Stearman flight, setting a world record for solo circumnavigation of the globe in an open-cockpit bi-

plane. In the process, he also set a world speed record for global circumnavigation in the open-cockpit biplane class. Previous circumnaviga-

tion records were attempted in 1990, 1991, and 1993. For various reasons, all of these attempts failed.

Robert, a professional aviator, spent six and a half years restoring and modifying his airplane, and promoting his Stearman World Flight project. Robert left Wiley Post Airport five months before, planning on completing the flight in three months. However, delays in India, Japan, and Russia extended his trip.



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Upon arrival at Wiley Post, Robert flew over the crowd, with the bright Oklahoma sun gleaming on the red-and-yellow airplane. He landed and taxied, S-turning as he went, to a stop about 100 feet in front of the Associated Aero hanger, one of his sponsors. The crowd clapped and whistled their congratulations and, the moment the propeller stopped, encircled the 450 Stearman, anxious for a close-up look at the grinning aviator.

The crowd of over 200 people included Robert's

family, friends in the Oklahoma aviation community, sponsors, and reporters. Oklahoma's Lieutenant Governor Mary Fallin read a commendation from the Governor. Julia Clay, representing Senator Jim Inhofe, read a personal letter from the Senator and presented Robert with a United States flag. Ms. Clay also read a letter of congratulations from Tom Poberezny, President of the Experimental Aircraft Association.

Another dignitary present was Dr. William D. Miller, head of the Oklahoma Aeronautics and Space Commission, who said, "This is phenomenal. Just the ability and gumption he had for an undertaking like this is remarkable. He's done it - and we're very proud of him."

A celebration of pizza and soft drinks was sponsored by the Birchett brothers of Associated Aero, Robert's brother and sister, John and Donna Ragozzino,

Robert Ragozzino signs autographs for admiring fans at Wiley Post Airport.

Oklahoma Aviator Future Uncertain- Help May Be Forthcoming

by Mike Huffman

As you no doubt have noticed, The Oklahoma Aviator is late reaching you this month. We want you to know why: changes are afoot for the paper, and dealing with them has caused the delay.

To do a good job of publishing the paper is a time consuming activity. Many tasks are required, including researching and writing stories, attending aviation events, coordinating with our contributors, laying out each issue, selling advertising, invoicing, keeping up with accounting and taxes, and maintaining our

aviation contacts across the state and the nation.

In order to provide the high quality we have established as our standard is a full-time job for at least one person.

When Barbara and I moved to Oklahoma, we had hopes of building up the paper to be able to support us. However, despite our efforts, that has not happened and, as a result, we have been required to find other employment.

While working other jobs, there is simply not enough time to do all these tasks right.

Because of these consid-

erations, continued publication of The Oklahoma Aviator is uncertain. In fact, Barbara and I had decided that the November issue would be our last.

However, a group of aviation-minded individuals, organizations, and companies is trying to change that decision. They believe The Oklahoma Aviator serves a valuable role in promoting aviation in the state, and should be supported.

So, they are mounting a campaign to lend assistance of various kinds. At this writing, the campaign is still in its early stages, so only time will tell what its effect may be.

Obviously, we are delighted that they (and apparently you, too) believe our publication makes a difference. It has been a labor of love for us and we do not want to give it up.

The next several weeks should "tell the tale." At this point, we've definitely committed to print a December issue. Beyond that, if it becomes necessary to discontinue publication, we want to assure everyone that we will not leave any reader or advertiser "holding the bag." We will offer refunds for undelivered advertisements or paid subscriptions.

In the meantime, we are

holding several subscription checks we have received over the past several weeks. If we do not continue publication, we will return them.

Some have asked how they can help. The best help in the short term would be additional paid advertising for the December issue. If you want to place an ad, please call or email us.

Note that we now have a new address and phone number in Tulsa: 4621 E. 56th Place, Tulsa, 74135 918-496-9424.

Our original email address, ok_aviator@mindspring.com is still good.

From Mike...



Writing "war stories" for the paper has been really fun and, in case this one turns out to be the last, here's the one I like best. I call it "The Great Rocket Caper."

As has been noted elsewhere, aviators tend to be people of great enthusiasm and zest for life. Besides aviation, they often are interested in other exciting pastimes that have a hint of danger, such as fast cars or motorcycles. Or, as was the case with some friends of mine, homegrown pyrotechnics.

Aviators also seem to have a low threshold of boredom. When the flying weather is not good, they become like little boys with nothing to do. That's when "idle hands do the devil's work!"

Such was the case on a drizzly fall weekend several years ago, as a group of us sat around the pot-bellied stove in a hangar at an unnamed airport near Tulsa. I can't be too specific about locations or names here, in case any of the local *gendarmes* might still be interested!

The conversation that day drifted over all the normal range of topics--airplanes, the weather, women-- and then came to rest on pyrotechnics. Around the stove that day, a scene was re-enacted which has occurred at tribal campfires during all ages and epochs. Old, oft-told stories were repeated once more, about past heroic exploits and near-fatal calamities, the retelling of which produced gales of laughter among those listening.

You have to understand, these guys were not content with buying fireworks at the local stand for the Fourth of July. No, they formulated their own alchemy using black powder, potassium chloride, zinc, and other mysterious ingredients and procedures. They blew up all kinds of stuff. They built different types of cannon, to lob projectiles like potatoes or steel ball bearings over long distances. They filled a weather balloon with acetylene, put in a long length of fuse, lit it and sent the lighter-than-air craft wafting into the heavens, toward its fiery and noisy *denouement*.

Everything they did was a spontaneous experiment--"Hey, what do you think would happen if we put an M-80 in a watermelon??" So, they'd go try it. Sometimes the results were

really cool, sometimes they were unspectacular duds, and, on more than one occasion, they were downright dangerous, with projectiles zinging past the ears of the observers.

That day, the conversation turned toward one of their favorite pyrotechnic endeavors: rockets. They had built and launched several rockets before and, as always, the goal was to go higher and make a louder "boom" than last time.

Somebody had built a new "warhead" about two inches in diameter and four inches long, with a green fuse sticking out the side. They decided to build the launch vehicle. A cardboard tube about eighteen inches long was selected, the warhead was installed and a balsa nosecone and fins were added.

These latter-day "rocket boys" knew they'd need extra thrust to launch it in a manner to meet the goal, so they mounted six solid rocket motors circumferentially around the main tube near the bottom, all connected with a common igniter wire. Anticipation was high, approaching giddiness, when finally a coat of black paint was applied (stealth, you know).

Now, meanwhile, I was a semi-silent observer of the proceedings. Still carrying vestiges of parental admonitions against "firecrackers," I was never really part of the pyrotechnics group. However, I confess to a vicarious thrill of being on the periphery.

Soon, everything was ready for the launch. About ten of us piled in one guy's van and headed to the top of a local hill for the spectacular event.

On the way, sitting on the floor in the back of the van, I examined the design from an engineering standpoint. Since all the rocket motors were displaced from the centerline, controlled flight depended on simultaneous ignition and equal thrust.

"So, what makes you think all the rockets will ignite at the same time?" I asked. "Well, they probably will," was the response. "And, are you sure they'll all produce the same thrust?" I continued probing. "We think they will..." "Hmmm," I thought.

At the appointed location everyone piled out and began setting up for the launch. A spot was selected, the trajectory was planned, and the "launching rail" (a piece of welding rod stuck in the ground) was put into place.

The official "launch crew" was selected and their procedures outlined. When all was ready, one of the guys would stand beside the rocket with his BIC lighter. Another guy would be ready with the Electrical Ignition Initiator (a set of battery cables to be touched to a long igniter wire). When Guy #1 began hightailing it

away from the rocket, Guy #2 knew it was time to "touch 'er off!"

As the rocket was slid down the launch rod in preparation, everybody moved back about ten feet. However, I decided the most prudent location for me would be behind the van, close enough to observe but with a big hunk of steel between me and the rocket should something go awry. So, I moved in that direction.

With all in readiness, the countdown began. Guy #1 did his BIC thing and then, big-eyed, elbows and knees pumping, rapidly vacated the vicinity of the rocket. Guy #2 nervously poked at the igniter wires with the battery cables, and finally found his mark.

For a second or so nothing happened, then Whoosh! The rocket zoomed straight up twenty feet or more (maybe my engineering concerns were unfounded). Then, however, it began to tumble rapidly, making a "whoosh-whoosh-whoosh" sound as it rotated. To my chagrin, I saw that its trajectory was now coming toward the van! I decided to run for it!

You've probably heard those stories about people who get thrust into high-stress situations, like a fighter pilot in an out-of-control airplane. Under those circumstances, time can take on a different character-- seconds can seem like minutes.

Such was the case with me as I ran toward the rear of the van. I was experiencing the whole scene in ultra-slow motion. I marveled as each step took what seemed like several seconds to complete, and I heard the slushy sound of each footstep hitting the layer of wet leaves on the ground, but like a 78RPM record played on 33RPM.

Now, unbeknownst to me, the rocket had indeed soared over the van, and in its rotational frenzy, had ejected the warhead, which landed, lit, in the wet ground about five feet away from the rear corner of the van.

Just then I, too, arrived at the rear corner of the van, still in my time-dilated retreat. As I made the turn, KER-BLAMMMMMM!-- the warhead went off! It was the loudest sound I had ever heard. Not really a sound, though, more like physical pressure on my body. The explosion shocked me back into real time. My brain was addled and I couldn't hear. I stood there weaving, trying to get my senses back.

Meanwhile, the rest of the group had seen the trajectory, heard the explosion, and had come running, not knowing what they would find in terms of carnage.

Their hurried arrival halted when they saw me standing there in a stupor. They looked at me in shocked silence a second or two, then suddenly, simultaneously, they all began

doubling over with laughter and pointing at me. I'll have to admit, I felt a little picked on at that point.

But I soon learned why they were laughing: The warhead, exploding as it did on the wet ground, had covered me from head to toe in mud and leaves. The effect was like the Monster From the Black Lagoon emerging from the swamp.

Moreover, the mud and leaves which had missed me had hit the van. There, outlined Wiley-Coyote-like on the rear doors, was my silhouette, captured in mid-stride. The explosion had blown both hubcaps off the rear wheels and, we found out later, broken the filaments in the taillight bulbs.

After regaining my senses, I cleaned up, we went to lunch, and in the next hour or so, I got my hearing back. During that time, the launch was revisited several times, each time with the same laughter as the first.

And, since then, the story has been retold sufficiently to achieve the status of legend.

Someone had thought to retrieve the rocket itself and, to this very day, it hangs on that hangar wall, as a true-life testament to The Great Rocket Caper, in which I will be immortalized as a legendary hero around the tribal campfire for all time to come.

As with all legends, it has inevitably become embellished with time, so that, I really don't remember what the real truth is anymore. Who cares, anyway? It's a great story!

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Up With Downs



Earl Downs

Courtesy

A couple of weeks ago I was flying the pattern with a student. We like to fly in the morning to catch the smooth air and this was a beautiful morning for flying. Ron, my student, was entering a standard left pattern for the uncontrolled field when we heard a traffic call from a plane coming in from the other side of the airport. The pilot announced that he was going to enter a right pattern for the same runway we were using. I mentioned to Ron that although a non-standard right pattern could put the traffic in conflict with us, at least the pilot had made a radio call to announce his intentions. We entered the downwind leg on opposite sides of the airport at exactly the same time and it was obvious that a traffic conflict did exist.

I figured this was a good oppor-

tunity to teach my student how to handle a non-standard situation so I had Ron radio to the other plane that we would extend our pattern to allow him to land. We slowed down and watched the other plane. It continued downwind for about another mile and I was beginning to wonder if he was actually going to land. The airplane finally turned base and after we extended for almost two miles, we finally turned base behind him. The plane made no other radio calls, did a touch-and-go, and departed the area. I couldn't help but wonder if the pilot of that plane was unaware that he had flown a non-standard pattern or if he simply showed a lack of courtesy. It made me wonder about how courtesy applies to flying. Are instructors supposed to teach courtesy or are pilots supposed to come by it naturally?

My experience in raising my children leads me to believe that common courtesy does not come naturally. That's why mothers constantly have to remind their kids to say thank you, please, may I, and most important, to never pick your nose in public unless you are driving a car. Pilots also need to learn that being courteous not only helps to keep everyone's blood pressure down, it adds to safety. Let's take a look at how courtesy and safety go together.

On the Ramp

The first courtesy should go to your passengers. Make sure they are aware of ramp safety. Most air travelers never get closer to an airplane engine than walking down the jetway to the airliner cabin door. When you preflight, make sure they stay away

from the "moving parts." Is your airplane parked where the starting engine will not blast a person or property? Even a little Cessna 152 can do damage if the propwash catches the open door of another plane. Look around before starting to be sure the area is safe. After starting, make sure the area remains clear of people, planes, dogs, and vehicles before you start messing with the radios. If at an uncontrolled airport, have your radio tuned to the CTAF frequency while you taxi out. Hearing other radio calls can give you a head start on what to expect in the pattern.

In the Pattern at Non-Tower Airports

Use your radio but don't overdo it. If it's a busy airport, make the calls that you know will help other pilots but keep the calls short and concise. Don't let your radio lull you into a false sense of security. It's perfectly legal for no-radio airplanes to operate from non-towered airports. If you are practicing touch-and-goes, let other traffic know. It allows them to fly a closer pattern behind you. Fly a pattern as close in as your comfort level allows. High performance planes should fly slow, consistent with safety. If in doubt about the intentions of other traffic, be prepared to give way even if you are sure you have the right-of-way. It makes no sense to be "dead right." Most important, don't let anger cloud your judgement.

In Flight

We all want to fly safely and keep our passengers safe, but there is more to it if you want to be re-

spected as a good pilot. Keep passenger courtesy in mind. Very few non-aviator passengers actually care about all the maneuvers you had to perform to get your pilot certificate. They simply want a comfortable ride. Keep the banks mild and make sure you don't descend too fast. Our ears are used to pressure changes but many people can't handle more than about 500 feet per minute. Remember that it's the descent that hurts the most. Get your passengers involved. Point out checkpoints and have them help look for traffic. Most pilots like to sit around and tell stories of their airborne adventures but these stories may make an uninitiated passenger uneasy. There is no reason that we general aviation pilots can't act like professionals.

I guess it just goes back to the need to look outside yourself and "do to others as you would have others do to you." I know that's an old thought that goes back a couple of thousand years, but it's fresh as a daisy when you apply it to your flying.

Want to share your ideas about aviation courtesy? You can reach me at earldowns@hotmail.com.

"Please know I am quite aware of the hazards. I want to do it because I want to do it. Women must try to do things as men have tried. When they fail, their failure must be but a challenge to others."

Amelia Earhart, in her last letter to her husband, 1937

PLANE POTPOURRI

Bob Richardson



Antoine de Saint-Exupery

Today, there are many things I should be doing. Important things that really need doing. Things that have waited too long. Things that cry out for my attention. Instead of doing those things, I sit at my desk reading a book that has spent forty years in the dark recesses of my bookcase. A book that was long forgotten. The pages and cover are beginning to show the years and I am sure a used book dealer or flea market book buff would pay it scant attention. I must admit that I had a hard time remembering where the book came from.

The volume that I now find hard to put down is an "Airman's Odyssey," a trilogy comprising "Wind, Sand and Stars," "Night

Flight," and "Flight to Arras" by the great French aviation pioneer and writer, Antoine de Saint-Exupery.

Why this sudden interest in a book I have ignored since Christmas of 1943? In a recent issue of "Time" magazine, I found a biographical sketch of the pilot and author, together with comments on his wartime writings, World War Two experiences, the fall of his beloved France, and finally his tragic death on an Allied photoreconnaissance mission over his homeland on July 31, 1944.

After reading "Time," I suddenly remembered something about wind and stars and a quick check of my book shelf revealed a copy of the "Airman's Odyssey." As I thumbed through the old pages, I recalled several attempts I had made, as a young man, to settle down with this remarkable book and read it from cover to cover. At that time, however, my mind was more attuned to the technical aspects of an aviation career rather than absorbing what seemed to be as the romantic

prose of a historian. On each occasion I put the book aside in favor of a text book or a maintenance manual while promising myself to read Saint-Exupery sometime in the future when I had more leisure time.

Now after nearly fifty years of technical aviation, I have found myself to be much more receptive to the romantic prose of Mon. de Saint-Exupery. I am ready at last to settle down and take a 1926 flight from Toulouse in southwestern France to Dakar in then French West Africa, or survive a crash in the Sahara desert, to fly over war-torn Spain, and to finally fly a photo recon flight over German-held Arras at two thousand feet.

Romantic? Not really. More like high adventure. The years can change one's outlook on life and writer Saint-Ex doesn't dwell on boring technical data, the likes of which I have finally put behind me.

As for my copy of the "Airman's Odyssey," it was given to me as a 1943 Christmas gift

while I was stationed at the Laredo Army Air Base at Laredo, Texas. It came from the girl back home, with a note, which is still in the book, apologizing because she was unable to find a better looking book to give me.

Saint-Ex was in the prime of life when he was taken from us. He was an original, one-of-a-kind, and he has been missed.

If you get a chance, read the "Airman's Odyssey." You'll be glad you did.

[Editor's note: This article was originally published in 1986, and revised in 1994.]



Just to help you get into the "proper" Christmas frame of mind...

Flight Destinations: Part 1- Grand Lake Regional Airport

by J. Thomas Pento, PhD

As most of you know Shangri-La exists as an island resort in the middle of beautiful Grand Lake of the Cherokees in Northeastern Oklahoma. Best of all it has an airport, recently reopened as Grand Lake Regional, with a hard-surface runway. With this "flight destination" in mind my wife, Maureen, was eager to join me for a cross country flight to Grand Lake Regional for a relaxing weekend visit to Shangri-La, the beautiful lake resort located on Grand lake.

Mid-summer thunderstorms had rolled through Oklahoma and Kansas the night before and delayed our scheduled departure time by several hours as the weather moved eastward. By late morning solid overcast was replaced by scattered clouds and a broken ceiling at 6000-ft MSL. Thus, we filed for 5000 ft and lifted off into a smooth summer sky. Since Maureen has taken the "pinch hitter" ground school and has flown with Louis, our favorite flight instructor, this flight was the perfect time to let her take the controls and sharpen her flying skills. I found that she could hold heading and altitude right on the money. As a matter of fact, shortly after the controls were returned to me, she casually mentioned that I was nearly 100 ft below my assigned altitude! I'm not sure whether I liked her better ignorant and afraid to fly -- or informed and cocky. Well, at least this way she felt secure in the cockpit and could serve as my human autopilot since Juliet (N9667J), our Cherokee 180, is not so equipped.

As we crossed the Tulsa VORTAC, the clouds were puffy balls, broken to scattered in most areas, while areas of solid overcast were also lingering about.

When we were 10-15 miles WSW of our destination, Grand Lake Regional, the layer below us was broken to solid overcast at 3000 ft in the direction of Grand Lake. Kansas City Center gave us a visual approach to the airport with the usual "descend at pilots discretion and report airport in sight." As we flew over the lake, we could see patches of water and land in narrow slots between the clouds. Finally a runway appeared and we were able to slide between the clouds, enter a left downwind to runway 35, cross the blue-gray waters of Grand Lake on final and land with moist palms.

Upon arrival I met Grand Lake Regional Airport owner and manager, Paul Stanton, who acquired the airport property several years ago and is in the process of transforming it into a fly-in resort community. Grand Lake Regional (3O9) is located in the middle of Monkey Island and adjacent to the Shangri-La Resort. This airport is 50 NM from the Tulsa VORTAC on the 54 degree radial. The airport has a 3500 ft 17/35 x 75 runway with a 200 ft displaced threshold at each end, which provides 3900 ft of takeoff distance. As the runway slopes from north to south, it is usually best to land on 35 and take off on 17 when the winds are light. Grand Lake Regional is a non-towered airport and CTAF is 122.7, which also controls the VASI lights. A GPS approach is planned but not currently available at this airport. We were told that Grove Municipal Airport (1H7), located just across the lake, has an instrument approach and that Grand Lake Airport will pick-up pilots at Grove Muni if an instrument approach is required.

The airport terminal building is a combination short order restaurant &

deli, convenience store, and real estate office. Paul told us that pilots will often place their order on Unicorn 20 miles out and find a hot meal ready upon arrival at the Airport's Touch & Go Restaurant. Adjacent to the terminal building, a 15,000 sq. ft. hanger was recently completed and construction has begun on a strip shopping mall. The airport property has plotted land for 26 residential homes along the taxiway. Each property will have a lake view and a marina will be located at the south end of the airport property. Now that is what I call an island paradise!

Another special service offered by the Airport staff to pilots in need of transportation is free limousine service anywhere on Monkey Island. Monkey Island,

which is seven miles long and 3/4 miles wide, is set in the very center of Grand Lake of the Cherokees. Grand Lake, located in the rolling hills of far northeastern Oklahoma, has 1,300 miles of shoreline and touches the towns of Grove, Affon, Ketchum, Bemice, and Disney, the hometown of baseball great Mickey Mantle.

We were impressed when the big white airport limo picked us up for the short ride to Shangri-La Resort, located on the northern tip of the Island. In the next issue, I'll tell you more about our relaxing stay at Shangri-La. To obtain more information on Shangri-La and other flight destinations, visit the author's web site at: <http://moon.ouhsc.edu/jpento/>.



What a way to go! This is a far cry from the typical airport courtesy car.

OKLAHOMA REGIONAL BUSINESS AIRPORT SUMMIT LAUNCHES AVIATION COMMUNITY INTO "NEW FRONTIER"

TULSA - The first Oklahoma Regional Business Airport Summit held here Nov. 1-2 and hosted by the Williams Companies was pronounced a "tremendous success" by Oklahoma Aeronautics & Space Commission (OASC) Director Dr. Bill Miller.

"We are very excited to have the opportunity to share this new frontier with the airports and city leaders from across the state," Miller said.

Thirty airports were represented and more than 100 community officials attended the event, which was presented by the OASC and the Oklahoma Municipal League (OML) and sponsored by many Oklahoma companies involved in business aviation. Speakers from across the country representing business aviation spoke about the unprecedented growth of turbine-powered aircraft and the challenge they present to the state's regional airports.

"These business aircraft will require longer runways for safety and demand a higher level of service for the crews and passengers," Miller said.

The two-day summit was the vision

of OASC Commissioner Bob Jandebaur. "By joining together this public and private sector partnership, we created a win-win opportunity for Oklahoma airports to learn about the future and how to plan ahead under common goals," said Jandebaur.

One focus was "Flightplan 2000," presented by Airport Business Solutions, which shared with attendees how to prepare a business plan for their airport. "From our point of view this event represents a very smart investment in the future for Oklahoma airports and their communities," said Michael Hodges, president and CEO of the Atlanta-based firm.

During the summit, local business and airport leaders heard how airports are a gateway to their cities and an economic engine for the community. Summit sponsor AARO Broadband Wireless Communications made a presentation on fixed-wireless Broadband -- a sophisticated new high-speed information and data communication system. AARO officials laid the foundation of a concept on how the airport would be the beginning point to pro-

vide each city with a new communication technology that otherwise would be years away.

Already a strong advocate of developing a system to bring connectivity to rural cities and towns in the state, OML saw the vision and the opportunity for success. "OML agrees that deploying a system statewide beginning with airports will create a larger potential economic impact for the municipalities," said OML Executive Director Danny George.

"The revenue created from telecommunications as a new utility service will help cities financially, plus (provide) enormous benefit to economic development," George added.

"By connecting the Oklahoma regional business airports, our state will lead the nation and set a new standard for others to follow," said AARO President/CEO Ron Baker. "This concept is so unique and such a powerful tool for these communities, we are very anxious to get started on the network."

At the summit, AARO provided the door prize, a "Wireless Village" valued at

\$250,000, which went to the City of Weatherford. "This certainly shows our strong support and commitment to the effort," Baker said.

"Oklahoma should be proud it has a reputation for being a leader in aviation, and this summit is further proof," said Henry Ogradzinski, president of the National Association of State Aviation Officials (NASAO), who served as moderator for the event.

The success of the summit led attendees to request that it become an annual event. Summit organizers discussed creation of an "Alliance" as a means to provide leadership and direction for the concept as development moves forward to Oklahoma becoming the first "e-State."

OML is a statewide, non-profit corporation currently composed of 447 member cities and towns. The League serves as a spokesperson for municipalities at state and federal government levels to achieve local objectives. By working together through the League, municipal officials formulate programs and unite in concerted action benefiting their communities.

Ragozzino Sets Round-the-World Record, cont'd

continued from p. 1.

and RockCity.com, another of his sponsors. Robert recounted his flight experiences, signed autographs, and posed for photographs.

Summarizing his trip in a hurried, pre-champagne comment, Robert said, "It's been a long trip - and I'm glad to be back." The crowd then began to ask questions, in hushed, almost reverent tones.

Q: "How many flight hours did you get in?"

A: "Just under 200. We actually had to replace the tachometer, so I have to add a couple of dozen to that."

Q: "How was the weather?"

A: "It was great. It was a beautiful flight. We had a lot of beautiful weather and a lot of poor weather - mostly good weather."

Q: "How was the Aleutian area?"

A: "The Aleutians were great. The whole time I was flying, it was perfect, with no icing."

Q: "Robert, it must have been really cold from Alaska on home- did you have a heated flight suit?"

A: "Yes, I have a heated suit, but did not have it along on the trip. We ran out of time to get the necessary electrical service installed in the airplane before the trip began. I considered it a low priority then, but considering that I'm two months later into the cold months, I wish it had been a higher priority!"

Q: "These last few days must have been anxious, knowing that you were going to see your family again after all these months?"

A: "Right, I'm really glad to be back. I had to start flying shorter legs, down to about two hours. I was flying between five and seven hours a day, but I had to cut it back."

Q: "What's the first thing you're going to do?"

A: "Sit down and not worry about flying for awhile."

Q: "Do you want to talk about your Petropavask experience?"

A: "Oh, I loved Russia. Russia is a great place. In fact, I've got a little Russian emblem up here [Ed: pointing to his cap]. The Russian people

were great. When I landed in Petropavask, the weather was very poor. As I taxied in, a truck pulled in front of me, then another truck behind me-- I definitely had never had trucks behind me before. But a whole group of people was there to meet me-- civilians, KGB, and military, but mostly civilians. They just said 'Welcome to Petropavask,' and it was good from there."

Q: "What were you thinking on this last leg into Wiley Post?"

A: "Well, I always thought I would make it, but as an aviator you always wonder if you're going to. So I got here and made a horrible landing. I thought, 'God, the harder you try, the worse they are.' I was trying real hard, so it was bad."

Q: "Was there any time during the trip that you thought you weren't going to make it?"

A: "Yeah, there were times when I didn't think I was going to get out of Russia. And really, I was just getting wrong information."

Robert landed back on American soil at Attu Island, Alaska in the Aleutian chain on October 25th, after a long unplanned stay in Petropavask, Russia. The original flight itinerary included a planned landing at Petropavask, but in the end, the Russians denied him permission to land, despite diligent attempts by Stearman World Flight and high-level political help. However, Robert's attempted leg from Japan to Shemya left only about an hour's extra fuel and, encountering adverse winds, he diverted to Petropavask, landing without permission. In a letter posted on his website, Robert formally thanked the Russian people for assisting him in continuing his trip, and stated his hopes to return to Russia to visit at a later time.

On October 25th, Robert wrote, "Today I departed Russia for Shemya. After six and a half hours over open water, rain, show showers and 30 to 40 knot wind-blown seas, I arrived in Attu, Alaska, 40 miles from Shemya. Attu has a north/south runway and was a better choice for landing due to the

high winds. I should leave for Shemya tomorrow afternoon."

Robert had a good time on Attu Island, and described it as a "mystical island of snow-covered mountains and crystal blue bays - and a scene of violent combat during World War II." On October 26th, he departed for Shemya, where he was storm delayed, but he and the plane were both warmed in a heated hangar.

By October 28th, Robert and the Stearman left Shemya for Adak, another of the Aleutian islands. "Each island is very beautiful with rocky beaches, waterfalls, and snow-capped mountain peaks," wrote Robert. Unsure of what to expect in Adak, he found an ex-Navy installation with dual runways and housing for 6,000, and "just plain great folks." While in the Aleutians he met people from Ada, Broken Arrow, and Pauls Valley, Oklahoma!

Robert arrived in the Dutch Harbor on October 30th. On November 2nd, he flew to Anchorage, over snow-covered rock fields, frozen lakes, and snow-crueted mountain passes, in headwinds that slowed him to 75 mph. Landing in Anchorage, dodging 747 exhaust blasts, he passed through customs and taxied the Stearman to a museum hanger for its accommodations. There, Robert wrote, "Bearing the cold temps - all is well with the Stearman and I. The natural beauty flows like an endless river under her wings. Effortlessly, the airplane takes me through God's country day by day, mile by mile. The Stearman is strong, I am weak."

Man and machine arrived in Ketchikan on November 5th. The majority of the trip was through narrow mountain waterways. Rain and cloud cover often reduced visibility to below acceptable levels. Robert explained, "It was down and dirty on the deck, but I was determined to get to Ketchikan. After four trying hours, we finally arrived. The weather is poor. It's always a satisfying feeling to feel the wheels roll into the runway after a tough flight." Upon arrival, he began planning the leg that would take him to Port Hardy, Canada, though the forecast seemed poor. Robert mused on keeping his schedule, for the world record was still reachable. The Port Hardy trip was successfully completed the next day.

On November 7th, Robert arrived in the Lower-48, touching down in Seattle, Washington. A few days later, he left Seattle for Baker City, Oregon, but show showers diverted him to a frigid Walla Walla, Washington. After a stop in Boise, Idaho, he arrived in Salt Lake City on November 12th, again through snow showers over the high desert plains and mountains. Robert began to shorten the legs of his trips down to 2 to 3 hours, due to the intense cold.

At Salt Lake City, all three local TV stations filmed Robert's arrival. From there, Robert flew uneventfully to Grand Junction, Colorado, to Denver, Colo-



A father explains one of the Stearman's fine points to his son. Several WWII Stearman pilots were present, nostalgically remembering their days in the most famous training airplane of all.

rado, and to Liberal, Kansas, arriving there on November 14th. Robert wanted to get home badly at that point, feeling like each minute was an hour.

Asked whether it was worth it and whether or not he would do it again, Robert replied, "Yes, I could - and might." Congratulations, Robert, you have made us all proud!

[Editor's note: See earlier editions of *The Oklahoma Aviator* for more information about Stearman World Flight, or contact them on their website at www.stearmanworldflight.com. You can reach Robert's email through the website, if you wish to send your personal congratulations.

We want to thank Laura Kriegel of Kriegel Communications in Oklahoma City for permission to use the front page photo of Robert signing autographs]



Definitely not your average Stearman panel..



Ragozzino's 450 Stearman—faithful to the end— on the ramp at Wiley Post.



ASK THE DOCTOR

BY DR. GUY BALDWIN
Senior Aviation Medical Examiner
ATP, CFII-MEI



White Coat Syndrome

This last week I had an aviator that sees me from South Texas come by. At regular intervals, he comes up to visit family in Tulsa and he plans his FAA medicals around those visits.

On examination, his renewal form was completed properly and his physical exam was okay, except the blood pressure reading my nurse obtained was 160/100. The FAA wants your blood pressure to be at or below 155/95. Usually, when a blood pressure reading is a little over the limit, my nurse will write it on a separate piece of paper (not in the box on the form) so I can come in afterward and retake it, expecting the reading to go down after the applicant has been in the room and relaxed for awhile. However, at the end of my physical examination of this airman, I took his blood pressure and found it to be still at 160/100.

His past blood pressures have all been normal and there had been, basically, no change in his weight or his physical condition that I could tell. We let him lay down in the room and I went to see two other patients. When I returned he stated that he had had several cups of coffee prior to the examination and was somewhat nervous that his

blood pressure reading had been too high. I again took his blood pressure and found it to be 165/110. It had actually gone up several points and, if I had continued the rest of the day, it would probably have gotten continually worse, as a result of his ever-increasing anxiety.

I asked if he could possibly return the following morning and maybe avoid his intake of coffee. He stated that he was leaving town that afternoon. It might seem that this was an impossible situation, since he lives in Texas. However, the FAA does allow us to have blood pressure readings taken by any health care professional, and it could just as well be done in his home location.

So I asked him to return to his family physician in Texas, have the nurse take the blood pressure, write it down, and fax it to me. If it is within the normal range of 155/95, I can at that time send him the medical certificate and send all the reports to the FAA.

If it is not within normal range and he has become truly hypertensive for whatever reason, the necessary tests will need to be done and we will complete his medical examination after he is stabilized on medication. In this case, I personally think the high readings were due to his anxiety and caffeine intake and therefore I don't anticipate any problems.

If you have any questions regarding this subject or any other, feel free to call my office at any time.

Guy D. Baldwin, D.O.

Okla Aircraft Sales & Excise Tax

By Clifford R. Magee,
Attorney-at-Law



The Oklahoma legislature has given the Oklahoma Tax Commission (OTC) the authority to collect excise taxes and/or sales taxes on the sales of aircraft and parts which take place within the State of Oklahoma.

The Oklahoma tax code classifies aircraft as tangible personal property; as such, sales of aircraft would normally be subject to sales tax. However, another section of the tax code dealing specifically with the sale or transfer of aircraft or parts establishes an excise tax. The excise tax applies when the new owner plans to base the aircraft in Oklahoma. In that case, no sales tax is due, since the tax code specifies that the excise tax is in lieu of all other taxes on the transfer.

However, if the new owner does not plan to base the airplane in Oklahoma, a sales tax applies.

The excise tax applies to aircraft and attached parts which are required to be registered with the FAA. The tax rate is three and one-fourth percent of the purchase price. The tax is due upon the transfer of ownership and must be paid within 20 days of the transaction. Failure to pay within the allotted time will result in a penalty of ten percent on the amount of the tax due plus interest of one and one-half percent per month until paid. If you buy an aircraft which is to be based in this state, you as the buyer are respon-

sible for paying the excise tax to the OTC. Also, as a buyer you are required to pay a registration fee as discussed in a previous issue.

On the other hand, if you sell an aircraft or part in Oklahoma, but the airplane will not be based in the state, you as the seller are required to collect the required tax from the buyer and submit it to the OTC. The amount of the tax is determined by the tax rate of the county and city where the seller is located.

Of course, for most every rule of law, there are exceptions. When aircraft parts are to be resold or are purchased by an aviation business with more than 250 employees, no sales tax is required. There is a long list of exemptions to the excise tax, briefly, to fit into an exemption the aircraft must be owned by its manufacturer, operated by a government agency, used in a commercial airline or held in an aircraft dealer's inventory for resale. The list of exemptions also covers various types of transactions between individuals and business organizations which are not subject to the excise tax.

Unfortunately, we are contacted all too often by people who did not collect or pay sales taxes or excise taxes. Unless the transaction falls within one of the exemptions, the consequences can be costly. The OTC has an entire division for aircraft. Aircraft operated in this state, and all others, are required to be registered with the FAA. A simple check of the FAA records gives a good lead to an aircraft owner. The OTC will contact the owner sooner or later with a large tax bill. You either pay it or file for a hearing. If you do not pay or lose the appeal, the OTC will issue a tax warrant with which they can attach more than just the aircraft.

One final note. If you think you can register your aircraft in Delaware you had better have a good reason to do so other than an attempt to avoid the Oklahoma Excise Tax.

Aviation is not cheap and no one likes taxes. Just keep in mind that the sales taxes you pay support the infrastructure you depend on everyday and aircraft excise taxes help pay for the airports you use.

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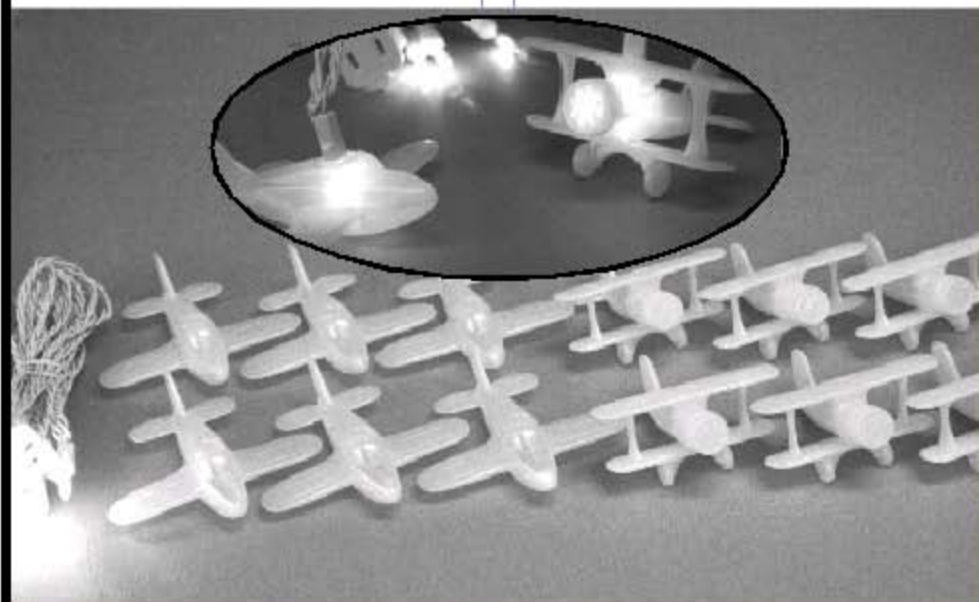
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Certainty in Paper

by Dave Wilkerson, FAA
Designated Pilot Examiner

Long decades have dealt the flying community examiners who approach airworthiness with astounding contrast. Some simply hop in and go, while others glory in every page from the plane's maintenance history. This variance in attitude is too bad, for it makes the act of researching an airplane's legality for a checkride somewhat like being a cat in a kennel. Is that strong? Our Friendly Aviator Authority (FAA) thinks not. They've studied this issue. They conclude that examiners should emphasize airworthiness knowledge. So we will.

This October, the FAA called for more focused testing from Oklahoma's designated pilot examiners. A repeating phrase was "Applicants can expect that . . .", and anything that tells applicants what to expect should be as welcome as a north wind during August on the prairie. In this case, perhaps not at first. If you have recently noticed that your favorite pilot examiners now ask for all the airplane's maintenance records, it is because they have a job to do. Please don't take it personally. For years I would accept recent photocopies of the maintenance records' pertinent pages. Having owned an airplane, I know the risk of losing the originals. For all our empathy, though, we "do not have the lati-

tude to accept an aircraft discrepancy that cannot be properly resolved under the requirements of the FAR." according to our guiding letter. More specifically, we examiners are not to even accept the 8710-1 application form unless all permanent aircraft records are available before the test begins.

Once upon a time we called these the "airplane logs." We've changed our phrasing for good reason; aviation is more complex than ever before. Aircraft logbooks are now specific to airframe, powerplant, and propellers. Airworthiness directives grow with the years, like tree rings, and older airplanes enjoy Supplemental Type Certificates (STCs) almost as often as they need Major Alteration and Repair Forms (337s.) Approved airplane or rotorcraft flight manuals mature with supplements as the rest of us find our lives filled with grandchildren. Naturally, each aircraft must have weight & balance documents, but do all have equipment lists issued by the manufacturer? Does the manufacturer issue updates? Does the manufacturer still exist? Applicants must use all these records to show the examiner that the airplane is airworthy during the pre-flight oral testing.

What if the documents are incomplete, or improper? Most likely, the examiner will consider the airplane unairworthy. We cannot offer guidance or advice to applicants swimming through the paper pool. The best plan is for the flight instructor and student to review all the documents immediately prior to the checkride. This plan is doubly reasonable in light of the letter's statement that "Applicants can expect that providing an unairworthy aircraft for a practical test is a valid reason for issuing FAA Form 8060-5, Notice of Disapproval." For those who instruct or await our time with the examiner, it is natural to see this as a double-edged threat -- but should we? The whole reason for checkrides is to demonstrate our safe insertion into a strong aviation community.

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**A MESSAGE FROM BOB JANDEBEUR
TO OKLAHOMA AVIATOR READERS**

The State of Oklahoma has always been a haven for aviators. From the earliest aviation pioneers such as Clyde Cessna and Wiley Post up through the astronauts of today, our history is rich with aviation accomplishments. Currently, we enjoy the benefits of being one of the most active aviation states in the nation. We rank 4th in total number of airports and 1st in number of airports per capita. Aviation activities in Oklahoma produce an enormous economic benefit to the state, totaling over 11.7 billion dollars.

The Oklahoma Aviator has, for more than twenty years, fostered and promoted aviation activities in this area of the country. Now, its future is in question.

As the new Oklahoma Aeronautics Commissioner for District 1, I firmly believe that *The Oklahoma Aviator* provides a benefit to all Oklahoma aviators, aviation businesses, and aviation organizations. We should **not** allow that benefit to disappear. Therefore, I am supporting *The Oklahoma Aviator* and I **challenge** other business and individuals to do so also.

If you would like more information on how you can help, please email me at bob@jandebaur.com.



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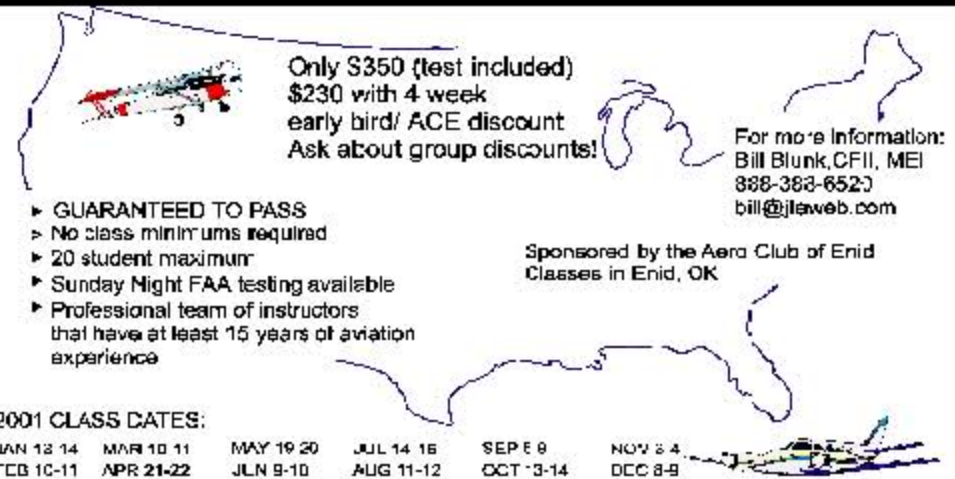
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Calendar of Events

For a free listing of your event, email us at ok_aviator@mindspring.com or call 918-496-9424

REGULAR MONTHLY EVENTS

1st Thursday- Oklahoma Pilots Association meeting and dinner, Wiley Post Airport, Oklahoma City, OK. Contact Helen Holbird- 405-942-6308

1st Saturday- Ponca City Aviation Boosters Club fly-in breakfast, rain or shine, 7:30-10:00AM, Ponca City Regional Airport, Ponca City, OK. Contact Don Nuzum- nuzum@poncacity.net or Bruce Eberle- 580-762-5735

2nd Thursday- Oklahoma Windriders meeting. For all balloon enthusiasts. 7:00 p.m. Metro Tech Aviation Career Center. Ron McKinney, President 405-685-8180

2nd Saturday- Debbie's Diner fly-in breakfast, R.L. Jones Airport, Jenks, OK

3rd Saturday- Green Country Ultralight Flyers Organization meeting. Call 918-632-6UFO for location and details, or call Bill Chilcoat at 918-827-6566 for additional information

4th Saturday- Keystone Aviators meeting and fly-out, 8:30AM, Pogue Airport, Sand Springs, OK, contact Carl Cartwright at 918-865-7213

4th Thursday- Vintage Aircraft Association Chapter 10, 7:30PM,

South Regional Library, 71st & Memorial, Tulsa, OK

NOVEMBER 2000

25th- EAA Chapter 10 Fly-In Breakfast, Gundy's Airport, Owasso, OK

DECEMBER 2000

2nd- Propblast Chili Feed, Vinita Municipal Airport, Vinita, OK 918-256-5170

2nd- Christmas Party, Oklahoma Pilots Association, The Wilds, NE of El Reno, contact Helen Holbird at 405-942-6308

16th- Christmas Party, Oklahoma Chapter of the Ninety-Nines, International Headquarters, Will Rogers Airport. Contact Ann Leininger at 405-936-0933

JANUARY 2001

13th- Hall of Fame Induction Dinner, Oklahoma Chapter of the Ninety-Nines, Kirkpatrick Center Omnplex. For more information contact headquarters at 405-685-7969

15th- Education Camp, "Golden Age of Flight," for Grades 1 through 4, Tulsa Air and Space Center, 7130 E. Apache, Tulsa, OK, covers lift

and drag on kites, wing shape, Bernoulli's principles, and understanding gliders., \$30/sudent. Call 918-834-9900 for more info.

FEBRUARY 2001

2nd-3rd- Garage Sale, Oklahoma Chapter of the Ninety-Nines, Trina Jones Home, 1708 Westminster Place, rain date February 23-24. For more information contact headquarters at 405-685-7969

15th- Education Camp, "Golden Age of Flight," for Grades 1 through 4., Tulsa Air and Space Center, 7130 E. Apache, Tulsa, OK, covers lift and drag on kites, wing shape, Bernoulli's principles, and understanding gliders., \$30/sudent. Call 918-834-9900 for more info.

MARCH 2001

26th-30th- Education Camp, "Aviation, Gliders, and Planes," for Grades 3-6, Tulsa Air and Space Center, 7230 E. Apache, Tulsa, OK, covers Lindbergh, clouds, Amelia Earhart, and commercial flight, \$198/sudent. Call 918-834-9900 for more info.

APRIL 2000

20th-21st- Education Camp, "Women in Flight," for Grades 1-5, overnight for mom or guardian and


daughter, Tulsa Air and Space Center, 7130 E. Apache, Tulsa, OK, \$30/sudent. Call 918-834-9900 for more info.

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An overhead view showing Lot 4 Block 4 on the left and Lot 5 Block 2 on the right.

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Trees abound everywhere at the Tenkiller Airpark. This is a view of Lot 5 Block 2 from the runway.



Short final for 23. If you lived here, you'd be almost home! Note the lake beyond the runway end.