

May

WITH THE WEEKDAY WARRIORS

The County tore down the sign on the gate early last month and has now gotten around to putting up a new one. Rather smaller than the original, it proclaims the field as a County Park and adds, "Open to the Public- Walk-ins Welcome" which all sounds very cheery, but consider the following tale. All the fliers had left one day, with the exception of Chuck Jenkins. In comes a pickup full of people who hop out and head into the bush. Chuck, being the good guy that he is, thought he should wait until they returned rather than lock the gate and leave them trapped. He waited two long hours! I think we need a sign warning people that the last of the fliers will lock the gate. I seem to remember that there was such a sign some time back, but nobody else does, so I may be remembering wrongly. We have added one recently, a fairly blood-curdling affair dwelling on the hazards of "aero modeling" (sic. Surely, it's a single word). I hope some nervous-nellie in the County administration doesn't see it and decide we are too, too, dangerous to have around. On a happy note: At least the new sign on the gate doesn't say, "Coming Soon - A New Golf Course".

Bill Hastings got a Dragon Lady from Chuck Jenkins and has been giving it an airing. This is a low-wing, fairly slick, 40-size ship which was kitted a good 20 years ago. Bill has also acquired, from Tim Wagner, a nearly-finished DHC-2 Beaver and needs - or at least would like to have - a little help. It came without a set of plans and they or the name of the kit-maker would be helpful. This is, by the way, a Beaver among Beavers. It spans over eleven feet and the fuselage is a good foot wide. Somebody should remember who kitted such a Goliath. How about it, you connoisseurs of the truly frightening? Where can Bill get a set of drawings for this beast?

Chuck Jenkins himself has been doing some flying lately when he hasn't been helping other guys tune their engines. What the heck has he been flying? Dunno. Forgot to take notes. I always have trouble organizing things when I get back to writing this column after a long layoff.

Vaughn Handchet brought out an ARF SNJ a few weeks ago and I am tempted to say that he fueled it ASAP and flew it PDQ, but there was some slight engine problem to be sorted out before it got on the runway. The aftermath was not, sad to say, a happy one. The ship rolled to the left on takeoff and went in, doing moderate damage. The ailerons were working in the correct sense and the cause of the mishap remains under investigation.

Doug McWha has been flying his Ultrasport 40 since the demise of his veteran Kaos 40. Of course, the Ultrasport is flying with the wing from the Kaos, because its own wing was torn up in the Kaos crash. It's a long story; talk to Doug.

Steve Harris stops in at the field on his way home from working all night and gets in a few flights. He's been flying a 4-Star 60 with, typically for Steve, an ASP 1.08 up front. There was - note the "was" - an even more Harris-ish hotrod in the form of a V-tailed something I think started life as a 500-Class pylon racer. Steve's was minus landing gear, but plus a large, piped OPS. How large? Alas, again no notes. Launching this monster was the sort of event that had spectators deciding which table to dive under - just in case, you understand - but it always came out well, albeit a tad shaky. It was quite fast and Steve said it was not as twitchy as you might think. No, I don't have the details of its passing.

The Toilet Saga is all over, but it was an epic while it ran. Since we have such hordes of crippled people coming out to the field, the County decreed that we had to have a "Disabled

Toilet” on the premises. The first two we got really were disabled: One had a door that would not open and the other had a seat which was trapped behind a grab bar and could not be lowered. To make up for this, the company raised the price, so we got a new company and a working facility is in place. The first two we got were enormous and I was afraid we’d get out there one day and find that a family of four and their horse had moved in overnight. The one we have is a bit smaller - they’ll have to leave the horse outside. The old outhouse is History. The move to place it on the National Register of Historic Places failed and the firm of Hastings & McWha demolished it without even a decommissioning ceremony.

And what has Your Columnist been doing? Well, tossing hand-launched gliders, hand-gliding some higher-performance ships, and hoping that we get out to that big, new field soon. I did go down to the NORCAL meet at Sacramento at the beginning of the month and rejoiced in the best weather we have ever had there in the seven times I have attended. Friday gave us a day about half cloudy for test-flying and it just got better and better. The wind was never too much to cope with except for the guys flying the ultra-modern birds whose engines turn 30 grand. As an Old-Timer and Nostalgia flyer, I’m tempted to say that they deserved it, but that would be mean, wouldn’t it? Okay, so I’m mean. Next Tuesday, when you gather at the meeting to grouse about how badly you were reported in this column, I will be safely out of reach - about four hours out of Rome on a night train from Munich. In a six-bunk compartment which is coed. I’ll let you know how that came out.

C. O’D.

June

WITH THE WEEKDAY WARRIORS

The Cray Pathetic North Lefthas been living up to its name. but it does tantalize us from time to time with a sunny day. Just, I guess, to show us what it could do if it weren’t feeling so mean. These nice days catch people off guard sometimes, because I have been don at the field all alone on some really flyable days- By the way, you will notice a couple of County—property picnic tables added to the rest of the field furniture. All in aid of this actually being a COUNTY PARK. I’d think that we shouldn’t spill fuel, drip oil, or blow engine exhaust on them, though dumping coffee or dribbling soda would seem to be acceptable. Just to keep the record straight, those table came on a Sunday, so you certainly didn’t read about it in this column.

Bill Hastings has continued to fly his Dragon Lady and its 0.5. .40LA appears to be enough horsepower. He has installed a new set of wheels, almost big enough to be classified as “tundra tires. They let him taxi with impunity through the rough on the east side of the runway.

Joe Kaiser turned up one day with a profile Gee Bee R-2 with an interesting control set-up. With the profile fuselage, all the electronic thingys are in the very thick wing, but the closed-loop cables that operate the rudder and elevator run through tubes enclosed in that narrow fuselage. This bird originated with Dave Upton, then went to Steve Harris before landing with Joe. It had a .40 in it at first, but Joe has installed one of those X&B .65s that came out between 15 and 20 years ago. They weren’t firebreathers but did swing a big prop reliably and were docile to handle. The plane is In the usual Granville Bros. Red-and-white, but age has decreed that a couple of red patches don’t quite match. And there’s a big green one which must be the product of an “It’s the only color I had!” situation.

Vaughn Handchet's Four-star .60 has a Magnum .80 4-stroke up front. Vaughn, no stranger to rough fields, also has a landing gear that is meant to shear off in times of stress without taking acres of the fuselage belly with it. It can be replaced in a trice — and was the other day after an encounter with that rough on the east side. Time for some of those Hastings balloons?

Jim Sherlock showed up at the field with a Great Planes ARF, the U-Can-Do, with a Saito .72 4-stroke for power- He had this one at Lorane last year and had a slight mishap with it near the end of the season. After gaining about 50' of altitude in a vertical climb on takeoff, there was an engine failure. Now, if you had to choose a place for a sudden engine failure, nose-up-fifty-feet-in-the-air would probably be pretty far down on your list of choices. It was on Jim's. There was a short tail-slide before it flopped over and almost pulled out. Almost wasn't good enough and the bottom of everything suffered. This was its first day out after release from the repair shop and Jim was tuning the Saito, using newly-acquired 30% nitro fuel. 30% I think I'm being daring when I run the .049 in my Dakota on 25%. Of course, it is a 53-yr.-old OK. Cub .049B.

Two ARFS on the field on the same day is almost more than my sensitive soul can bear, but Larry Church came with a Hangar 9 machine called Twist. He has an older O.S. .46 in it, old enough to have a real man's needle valve up front instead of on the backplate which gives you no real chance of acquiring a few honorable stitches. The 0.5. started at the first flip, but Larry says that was just the engine showing off for strangers. There are still some internal details to be worked out, so this was just a range-check and engine-run outing.

In between flights with his EasySport 40, Doug McWha has been holding my little PT-49 for me while I wind for some low-power test flights. He's getting pretty good at handling something whose longerons are 3/32 sq. and whose nose sheeting is 1/32.

When last I left you, I was on a nighttrain between Munich and Rome. A lot of you know how many trips I have taken without the slightest hitch disturbing the procee-dings. On this one the tolerances finally ganged up on me. I won't go into all the sad details, but consider this: I left on a Monday and didn't see my bag until Thursday. The one good thing that happened was that I finally got to the Italian Air Force Museum. It is outstanding. I have been to air museums in ten countries and I haven't seen one better. Bigger, yes. Just as good, yes. But not better. There are four big hangars, all light and airy. The exhibits are in first-class condition and displayed so that you can get a good look at them and photograph them. It starts with WWI and goes through to the Jet Era. They have four of the Schneider Cup racers, including the M.C.72 which did 440 mph on floats, mind you in 1934. The Caproni-Carpini C.C.1 is there and I had to chuckle when I read the placard which described the powerplant as "sort of an after-burner without the jet engine". I have been describing it that way for years. Some hot stuff from WWII as well. I took about 10 pictures there and you won't see a one. On Sunday morning, in Rome's main railway station, I lost my camera bag to a thief. He also got my good nylon jacket, my contact lenses, railpass, U.S. cash — and the pills I had to take for the next two weeks. I was on a plane home the next morning. Ah well.

C. O'D.

July

WITH THE WEEKDAY WARRIORS

The sun's been out! So has Steve Harris with his 4-Star 60, the one with the 1.08 in it. While cleaning it after a recent day's flying, he found the portside stab pretty well cracked off. It's been

fixed and is back to flying wildly. Steve has also been flying a 40-size "bitsa" - you know, built from bitsa this one and bitsa that one. There's a piped OPS 60 and this bird has a landing gear, since Steve has sworn off hand-launch.

Bill Hastings has been bringing out a Robin Hood with the whopping span of 99". This is from an old World Engines (I think) kit and was put out in several sizes. It's a stand-well-back-scale version of the Curtiss Robin, a late-20s (originally) cabin ship, built with a variety of engines ranging from the 90-horse OX-S to the 185-horse Challenger, Bill's has a hulking Super Tiger 4500 on the firewall, an engine he has had converted to capacitive - discharge ignition on which it is running very happily (making Bill equally happy) and is proving particularly abstemious when it comes to gulping its gasoline-based fuel. Bill is using a higher oil content than most users of CD engines because the ST'S crankshaft has a sleeve-, not ball- bearing up front.

While we're talking about Bill, it must, alas, be reported that he attempted to fly his Dragon Lady between two tree limbs across the field - not intentionally, it must be added. It was an endeavor not crowned with success. Repair methods are being debated as this is being written.

And what of Doug McWha? Doug has tried to outdo Bill in the old-kit game by bringing out his Contender, now with an O.S. 45LA for power. Surely this design goes back a good thirty years. What the heck! The Kaos is a very nice machine to fly ad it goes back thirty-five.

7/4/05 was a Monday, but a holiday, and it brought some weekenders out to be Weekday Warriors for a day. (We allow that, but only once-in-a-while so they don't get uppity.) It was V.I.P. Day as the President himself, Frank Blain came out with his Funtana 90, modestly powered by a mere YS 1.20 four-stroke. This is a Silvestro Sebastiani ARF, the second one of its kind that Frank has had. The first folded a wing due to diagonal (!) grain in the mainspar. Frank shot it back to the company and they refunded his money. A few weeks later, they sent him a new kit which is the one he's flying now. The prescribed CG location was farther to the rear than Frank found comfortable, so it was shifted forward after the first flight made in concert with Steve Harris. Frank says the rearward CG is for the wild-and-crazy fliers and he doesn't intend to be one. Hermon Lowery, an old Mid-West friend, says of the so-called "3D" flying, "You have to admire the skill of the guys who do it, but it ain't got nothing to do with flying." Not only do I make allowances for a old B-17 pilot in the matter of grammar, but I agree with him fully.

Ray Tatum has a U-Can-Do with a Magnum53 two-stroke and it impressed the assembled throng with its vertical performance. This seems to be a nice-flying design, so it is a shame that it's a ARF and thus can never hold up its head in respectable society. Ray did have an unexpected flame-out at low altitude and arrived with a thump from a too-tight, too-slow turn onto final. Big hole in the turtledeck. Oh, he landed upright - but the gear came of f, flew up, and bashed the top of the plane.

A day after the debut of Frank's Funtana 90, Fritz Peters showed up with the same design, just a bit smaller. Maybe less than half the size, it was, and with a electric motor instead of the YS. Looked okay to me, but someone said that Fritz was juggling batteries for ideal performance. By the way, when I was wrestling with single-channel P/C about 45 years ago in Northern N.J., Fritz was going through the same contortions in Lowell, Mass.. Here we are, 45 yrs. and 3000 mi. removed - and still struggling.

Joe Kaiser's ARF Pizazz has an 0.5. .46FX for power and appears to go quite well, but Joe

is not high on the aeroplane itself. He says it doesn't do exactly the sort of flying he expected of it and that he really prefers his tried-and-true profile Gee Bee.

Did you read the piece in Model Aviation about the "Shared Spectrum" technology that enables a transmitter to send out its signal on constantly-changing frequencies to a slaved receiver. This lets thousands of signals go through without any interference and is what makes it possible for all those horrid little mobile telephones to intrude upon your daily life. Now they are saying that it might apply equally to R/C work. Were you aware that the whole idea started as a radio-control application 65 years ago? Two people came up with the idea, patented it in their names, and gave it to the Navy out of sheer patriotism. The application was for a radio-controlled torpedo and the frequency changing was done mechanically, electronics not being what they are today. The Navy thought, correctly, that it wasn't practical given the technology of the time, but thought enough of the idea to clamp a "Secret" label on it for 25 years. The inventors were an interesting pair: George Antheil, a very "modern" composer of classical music, and Hedy Lamarr, one of the major glamour-girl actresses of the 30s and 40s. In fact, Miss Lamarr had several scientific patents in her name as time went on. The lady wasn't just decoration.

C. O'D.

August

WITH THE WEEKDAY WARRIORS

Bill Hastings bought one of those 20"+ wooden props from Mark Stafford who had gotten it, but had never taken it out of the box. When they did open the box out at the field they were surprised to find that it was a unfinished prop. The leading edge was flat and the wood was bare of any lacquer. Bill took it home and did a dandy job of making a usable prop out of it and it is now on his Robin Rood. It wasn't an easy job. The first try involved two finishes that were incompatible and the prop had to be scraped down to the raw wood for another go at it.

Larry Church was wandering around a patch of the Creswell strip with the air of a man who had lost something. He had: An upright for the rear fuselage of his Topflite Elder, lost when that rear flexed more than somewhat in a hard "arrival". You'll remember that the Elder is a generic "pre WWI" monoplane of the Morane/Bleriot/pflaz/Fokker sort, with the fuselage uncovered behind the cockpit. "So, just cut another upright", you say. "But this one fit", is Larry's plaintive reply. This ship has one of those old HP .46 4-strokes for power, the ones which have the carb coming out of the top of the head in front. Looks like a streetlight hanging over the crankshaft housing.

Doug McWha's U—Can—Do has the same Magnum 52 power that Ray Tatum's has, but Doug was having starting trouble - but only for the first start of the day. He'd have to flip it over upright for the first flight, but subsequent starts were all with the engine inverted. That was eventually traced to a siphoning problem caused by a misalignment in the tank-filler-engine piping. More serious were the glitches he was getting from time to time in flight. A change of receiver was the solution there, if I am remembering correctly. The model has since been "dumb—thumbed", in Doug's words, but, seeing as how it happened on a weekend, it didn't really happen at all for purposes of this column.

Now that brings you up to 8/1, but since then, I have been at the new field, getting ready for two contests. I can tell you that on one of those days I encountered the well—known airfield—

building firm of Hastings and McWha laying out mat and supervising the spreading of gravel. Did I hear correctly — 20 truckloads? Another day, the Prez himself was overseeing a guy with an earthmover leveling the strip. This isn't just a matter of scraping out a large rectangle. The strip has to be raised in one place, lowered in another, and arched on the centerline so that the rain runs off and we don't end up with an ROW pond the size of Crater Lake down at the west end.

On another day Frank and Doug were taking turns on a roller which I gather would loosen the fillings in your teeth if you stayed on it too long. Between stints on the roller, Frank was pulling a timber/cyclone fence creation around the perimeter of the strip. This not only smoothed out what will be the pit area, but also gave Frank an Unparalleled opportunity to collect a thick layer of dust on his truck - inside, too, said Frank. So you see, people have been out working on your new airfield.

FIRST FLIGHTS

I may have the first flight on the new field and it also ended in the first crash. An ill— advised launch of my Dakota into a big gust just as the engine sagged. Took off the whole nose. It's flying again, as Frank and Doug can attest. The next day, 8/3, I had a whole morning of successful flights with four models. I gather that Jim Corbett was out with some of his electrics. Did he beat me or was his just the first R/C flight? Frank made the first takeoff from the new runway (dirt) this morning (8/16). First landing, too, right down the strip.

Not sure about the future of this column. My typewriter is on its last legs. Most of the “n”s in this column took multiple strikes - as many as 20 — to get one to come up on the screen. The ‘tc”e and “m”s are almost as bad. The manufacturer abandoned it long ago and nobody fixes them. There are no parts to be had - I fear I will be forced to buy a very expensive “word processor” which will take up more than twice the 16½” x 16½” this machine occupies. I'll resist that for months.

C. O'D.