

# International Fleet Club NEWSLETTER

## COVER PHOTO

Great historical photograph sent in by Blake Reid.



## EDITOR

Jim Catalano  
8 Westlin Lane  
Cornwall NY 12518

## EMAIL

fleetclub@mac.com

## TELEPHONE

845 - 534 - 3947

## FLEET WEB SITE

[www.fleet-club.com](http://www.fleet-club.com)

## FLEET NET

groups.yahoo.com/  
group/fleetnet

## DESIGNER

Jesse Catalano

## FROM THE EDITOR

Lots of great stories and progress reported in this issue: thanks to all the members who are contributing their news.

I continue to field calls from Fleet owners and the occasional prospective buyer, curious about these extraordinary and relatively rare airplanes. Making connections between folks needing information, parts, planes is a big part of the Editor's role and I enjoy the conversations.

I've been busy upgrading the Fleet Club files and software and made some changes in the website hosting set-up. Please make a note of the new address: [fleet-club.com](http://fleet-club.com).

And make sure that we have your correct mailing and email addresses so that you get a copy of the newsletter!

Happy fall flying!

Jim



## MEMBERS WRITE

### Blake Reid

[breid@magma.ca](mailto:breid@magma.ca)

Vintage Wings of Canada is a charitable organization based in Ottawa and dedicated to the preservation of Canadian military aircraft from the WWII era. In 2011 we celebrated the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan by flying a group of 5 aircraft across western and central Canada to former BCATP airports as well as attending Oshkosh. One of these aircraft was our Fleet 16 Finch purchased the previous fall.

It was decided to make some significant repairs to the aircraft prior to its voyage, the largest repair was a complete rebuild of the 28 foot upper wing. Because 28 foot long pieces of spruce were unavailable, splicing was required. This did take longer than expected so the aircraft participated in the second half of the tour after being trucked out to Winnipeg and was able to make it to Oshkosh.

Our Fleet Finch was originally a 16B but now has the 160 hp engine. It has a modified bracket for rudder cable attachment to the tail wheel. We fly it from the front seat on grass and pavement. We were lucky enough to find a canopy last year which is being repaired for installation. The engine is being overhauled by Al Ball and should be back this spring for the 2012 Yellow Wings tour visiting eastern Canadian BCATP airports.



### Bud Silvers

[flynlow@usaviator.net](mailto:flynlow@usaviator.net)

Hello all! Well, once again I had the only Fleet at the National Biplane Fly In. Even so, it was a great fly in. We left Colorado Springs East airport (A50) at 0730 on Thursday May 31st and flew to Goodland, Kansas for fuel. Another fuel stop in Hill City, Kansas, then arrived in Junction City, Kansas in the early afternoon. The weather en-route was unfortunately cold and rough but I have often said that the worst day flying an open cockpit biplane is still better than ordinary days! Friday at the fly-in was also cold and a bit rainy during the afternoon. Finally Saturday was beautiful! What a day! Light winds, clear blue skies, and biplanes all over the place. The Fleet was parked in a very prominent spot, where every airplane in or out had to pass us.





## Buddy Wehman

[wehmanbuddy@gmail.com](mailto:wehmanbuddy@gmail.com)

A few months ago I came across a photo of a Travelair 4000 and was impressed with the contour of the one piece windshield at the rear cockpit. So I decided that my Fleet needed a similar one to take the place of its Stearman type windshield. I wanted it to have a full-length aluminum holddown strip rather than tabs. Not having a lot of aluminum forming experience (like almost none) the learning curve was steep right from the start. I did a little reading and then started making forms - one to mimic the shape of the top of the fuselage and one for making the necessary angle bend in the aluminum. Then came the hammering over the homemade wooden form blocks. Piece of cake! I glued a strip of bicycle tire tubing on the back side of the aluminum and used rubber washers in front of the metal washers and nuts attached to the machine screws holding the lexan in place (hopefully that will help reduce the chance of cracking). After finishing the project, I received an unexpected bonus -- the whole reason for doing it was to make a cool looking windshield. The view from the 'office' was a thousand percent improved - no frame obstructions.

I know that some of you master builders out there, like Stan Sweikar and Bud Silvers, have to be chuckling at my making such a big deal out of this pretty minor accomplishment but for me it was a big step. I'm reminded of what they say about an airplane rebuild

project being nothing but a series of small projects that eventually come together to make a whole flying machine. But for now, my rebuild project is finished and it is back to flying!

## Larry Powell

[lcp013@aol.com](mailto:lcp013@aol.com)

I now own NC 606M, Fleet Model 2, S/N 182. It used to belong to George Emorian who passed away in late 2011. It is finishing a re-build after being on its back in 2004 and is presently being inspected, rigged and some squawks being addressed. I hope to have it flying this summer. It is powered by a B-5 Kinner and has a basic electrical system in it with battery and wind-driven generator, along with brakes and a Scott tailwheel.

## Peter Walker, Calgary, Alberta

[b\\_walker@telusplanet.net](mailto:b_walker@telusplanet.net)

Just thought I would let you know that my father soloed in 4494 on your back cover of the Dec. '11 newsletter, on Jan. 27 1941. I believe Cam Harrod owns it now and my daughter was able to go up in it two years ago in Ontario. I unfortunately still have to trim down to meet the weight requirement but hopefully this year. Dad also trained in the plane now owned by Vintage Wings. I have enjoyed your newsletter immensely. Keep up the good work. I am working on disposing of some of my other projects to acquire a Fleet.

## Sad News from Keith Dyson

[Keith.A.Dyson@boeing.com](mailto:Keith.A.Dyson@boeing.com)

With much sadness and a heavy heart I must pass along that my Dad, Henry A (Hank) Dyson passed away May 30th following a battle with cancer.

Dad was responsible for introducing me to the world of aviation and more importantly, the world of antique biplanes. Got my first ride when I was four years old in our Adcox Special Student Prince and I was hooked. I will continue the restoration of our model 2 converted 7, N743V, and now have the lower wings spread out in my basement for the new spars. Dad had previously owned at least two other Fleets that I'm aware of, N226H and N39617 along with several of other antique airplanes. During one of my visits last month, he had a copy of the December newsletter and pointed to the article from Paul F. Smith, telling me he and Paul's father Chuck had flown together back in the day. My Dad flew his 32 year airline career with United following four years with the Air Force flying 100 combat missions in Korea.



Buddy Wehman

When things in my life settle down a bit I'll hopefully do a better job of communicating our Fleet status and getting back in touch with many of you.

There's still quite a few parts I'll need and I'm extremely grateful we have the resources and expertise this network provides.

## Graham Orphan

[cwd@cwd.co.nz](mailto:cwd@cwd.co.nz)

Happy New Year from far away New Zealand! Just a quick note to thank you for your efforts on behalf of all Fleet operators around the globe. It's so nice that people care enough about these fairly rare machines, to be supporting them in this manner. I have previously written about the NZ history of Fleet aeroplanes - two aeroplanes in all, one crashed in 1938, and my own 16B which I have been flying since 2004. I also have a friend flying one in Australia, however there were no original Fleets in OZ, just this more recent arrival. I'll attach a couple of photos of myself flying ZK-AGC, formerly N128H from Phoenix. Sandy Brown has been out and visited us and seen this machine flying.

Attached below is a link to a recent flying day at our local airfield at which I had the Fleet out and flying. We are doing these every two months now that we have such a range of interesting old aircraft that can participate. This happens just outside our aviation museum so provides a lot of additional attraction and entertainment for our museum visitors from around the world.



<http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.436949536325928.93759.133073063380245&type=3>

I have had a wonderful time flying the Fleet over the past seven years. She's a very good, solid and honest aeroplane. I have also owned Tiger Moths and a Stearman and am impressed that the Fleet seems to fit right between them, having the manageable size and weight of the Tiger, with the extra performance and conveniences (brakes, starter etc) of the Stearman. These aeroplanes are severely underrated!

Let us hope that 2012 proves a happy safe and healthy year for all Fleet operators around the planet!

## Roberto Vera Vierci

For me also is a pleasure to receive news from fellow Fleet owners. I am sending you recent photos of my Fleet at our club in Yvytu (Paraguay). You can see more of our club in our site: [yvytu.org](http://yvytu.org)





**Stan Sweikar**

[stansweikar@yahoo.com](mailto:stansweikar@yahoo.com)

February: Been working full bore on completing the Fleet project. Hope to roll out mid to late April for final assembly and first flight this summer. June: Getting real close to first flight. Wings and tail were installed and rigged to Fleet Model 2 (NC431K) on June 7th. No surprises, all went well on the assembly. Aircraft was weighed on June 16th, showing a slight increase in weight with the Y-150 starter and battery installation. Now for the finishing details and hopefully first flight in 24 years by 4th of July. Then on to Blakesburg and Brodhead.

July: Roll-out and first flight in 24 years of Fleet NC431K took place at Wingfield Airstrip (MD01) on July 1st. All went well with no rigging adjustments required and only several minor instrumentation gripes. Happy days are here again!

**John Barker**

[jcbarkerco@gmail.com](mailto:jcbarkerco@gmail.com)

I finally moved into my new shop and have set up the press once again. Nose ribs, full ribs, short capstrips, uprights, all available. I also have some original ribs available, some of the heavy aileron ones, I believe too.

My new address is 215 Brothers Rd. Hartland, Vermont 05048. Phone 603-661-6213 cell.

**James Bowser**

[bowser@iaw.com](mailto:bowser@iaw.com)

I currently work at Fleet Canada in Fort Erie and have been actively involved in the history of our products for some time now. I'm sharing some photos I took during the recent "Yellow Wings Tour" of Vintage Wings of Ottawa Canada, where I was able to photograph 4 Finches, 3 Cornells and the only Fleet 21 together in one place. If you would like I will send you a CD of the photos (about 260) you may use. I have printed a copy of your newsletter for the plant lunch rooms as well.

**John Elliott**

Just thought I should also give a quick note for the newsletter too. Fleet NC86V is still in my hands going on year three of ownership now. I have about 100 hours on her and she is really a great flier. I have had the opportunity to fly some other biplanes of the same vintage and the Fleet really performs on par with the best. I now fly with the Flying Circus Airshow in Bealton, Virginia. We put on an old-fashioned barnstorming airshow every Sunday from May to October and the Fleet is a real hit with the crowds. We also have Bryon Stewart's Fleet model 7 in the show. Keep up the good work and let's keep those Fleets flying!



Stan Sweikar

## FOR SALE

### Elroy (Buck) Hilbert

[buck7ac@gmail.com](mailto:buck7ac@gmail.com)

This is "Buck" Hilbert One time owner of Fleet -2 and N-431K and later The prototype Fleet 10 487H. I loved both of them, but unfortunately passed them on to others for various reasons. 487 Hotel was on Floats for one season, but I couldn't bear the beating the airframe was taking flying off rough water. Between Brian Van Wagnen and I we must have given more than a hundred rides on those floats. I have nothing but memories and a Ted Hendrickson prop off of my Warner 145. It's a beautiful prop, but experimental and it does have a Hub to fit the 145. If anyone might have an interest, Give me a call or Email. E.E. "Buck" Hilbert, 815 923 4591, Funny Farm Airfield, 8102 Leech Rd., Union, Illinois 60180-9671 Thanks for keeping me on the Mailing List This 87 yr. old one-eyed pilot is still flying my "Champ". Over to you, EAA 21, Vintage 5. Past President EAA Vintage Airplane Association.

### Sandy Brown

[kinnerboy@comcast.net](mailto:kinnerboy@comcast.net)

Here is a cleaned up scan I just finished. Those who have a Y-150 but no manual might like to have one. All one has to do is get a copy of this file from the Fleet Club. I hope to find time to make other info available... for free.

## WANTED

### Bruce Allen

[tailwindsof41@aol.com](mailto:tailwindsof41@aol.com)

Hello! Just one instrument to go for my 16B to have completely original instruments for my panels front

and back and I could use some help!! If anyone knows where an original Canadian Aircraft Instruments and Accessories LTD, type SA1L altimeter is or has one that they are willing to let go, call me or e-mail! Altimeter is a 20,000 ft altimeter with the adjustment knob at the six o'clock position. I would be very appreciative and grateful for any help whatsoever! Thanks!!!!

## RESOURCES

The Resources section – a listing of professionals and providers of Fleet expertise and parts – has remained fairly stable for many years. In order to have space for other items of interest, it will not be printed with every Newsletter. Instead, we will post and update the Resources section on our web site, and will print it occasionally when space allows and/or substantial changes are needed. If you need a printed list, contact the Editor. Vendors, please review your listing, and send any corrections or editions to the editor at : [fleetclub@mac.com](mailto:fleetclub@mac.com)

## CLUB INFORMATION

### How to Read Your Mailing Label

There are 5 pieces of information on the first line, each separated by a slash [/]:

Model # / Serial # / Registration # / Status of Aircraft / year of your last donation to the newsletter. If there is a question mark [?] instead of a year, we have no donation record. If you see two slashes together, that data is missing and we would like to hear from you about it. No data between the slashes means there is no record of you owning an aircraft. Also note regardless of how many aircraft you own, there is only space on the label to note one.



James Bowser

## Making Donations

There are no dues required for Fleet Club membership. Donations of any size are welcome and most appreciated, however, to support the production and mailing of the newsletter and website. Please make checks payable to Jim Catalano. To facilitate international donations, members can wire funds directly to the account; please e-mail Editor for instructions.

## Recent Donations

Many thanks to the following members who made donations to the newsletter fund since December, 2011:

Antique Aero Engines	Larry Powell
Phill Bragg	Jerry Reider
Francis Delmar	Clifford Schrock
Dan Martinez	William Sieg
Jaap Mesdag	Buddy Wehman
Earl Peacock	

## Membership Information Form

Use this form to become a member of the club and

## Members' Information Form

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

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New Member

Discontinue Print Newsletter,

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Change Information

Donation Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Year \_\_\_\_\_ Fleet Model \_\_\_\_\_ Engine \_\_\_\_\_

Serial # \_\_\_\_\_ Registration # \_\_\_\_\_

Aircraft Status  Flying  Restoring  Storage  Display

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

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become part of our database, or to change any information in your existing file (e.g. change of address or telephone number), or to report the purchase or sale of a Fleet.

## Electronic or Paper Newsletter

With the increasing cost of paper and postage, and concerns about the environment, we want to make sure that we're not wasting resources. If you would prefer NOT to receive the paper version of the newsletter by US Post Office mail, and would prefer to read it on the website and view photos in living color, please let us know ASAP via e-mail: [fleetclub@mac.com](mailto:fleetclub@mac.com).

## Your Photos for the Newsletter/Website

We love including your photographs in the newsletter and on the website. If at all possible, digital photographs are ideal. We can also scan good quality photographic prints and will return them if you indicate that's your preference. Generally, photocopies of photographs don't reproduce well enough to include.





International Fleet Club  
**N E W S L E T T E R**

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**Jim Catalano**  
8 Westlin Lane  
Cornwall NY, 12518

