Utah Rotorcraft Association

January 2010

New Year Brings Focus on Webinars, ROTR

Our Winter Webinar Series for gyroplane enthusiasts approved and budgeted by URA in November has now grown to at least six, with the addition of three weeknight sessions tentatively slated for Tuesday nights in February. For access to the needed internet and telephone capabilities, we'll meet at DTI in Springville, UT, just north of Airgyro. (*See directions on page 8*.)

The first session is January 9 and will feature a presentation titled, "What to Expect at Your Gyroplane Check Ride." The presenter is Terry Brandt, CFI and Designated Pilot Examiner based in Arizona. (*See Webinars, page 2*.)

Are You Equipped? You can participate in the URA Winter Webinars from nearly any Microsoft Windows, Mac or Linux computer, often without special software. Because the audio portion of the program is sent over a telephone bridge, like a conference call, you may also want a speakerphone. The cheapo model from Office Depot will work, but for best results...(*See "Equipped?", page 3*)

ROTR 2010 - It's time to begin a monthly, expanded look at ROTR 2010. Above, the "red steel" for a new hangar at Brigham City Airport is in place. Below, the building awaits its roof and doors. URA VP Curt Pittman's co-owns this building, which will be available for forums by day, and aircraft parking by night. (*See "ROTR Update," back cover*.)

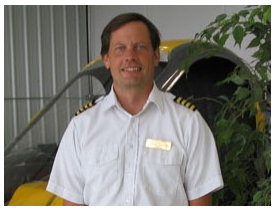
Webinars *(from page 1)*

February 13, Jay Carter, Jr., (*left*,) CEO and Chief Designer for Carter Aviation Technologies, discusses the recent licensing of its technology to the AAI division of Textron, and will update the Carter PAV unveiled at EAA AirVenture Oshkosh 2009 (*at right, bottom*.)

March 13 will feature PRA Secretary Stan Foster, (*below*,) sharing details on his Helicycle build, which may be completed by then.

These sessions will start promptly at 11am MST, following our regular 10am monthly business meetings, which will be conducted as interactive, live webcasts, allowing URA members and visitors to participate from distant locations.

Weeknight sessions have been added on Tuesdays, February 9, 16 and 23, featuring a three-part series on gyroplane stability and flight testing. The program has been prepared by Greg Gremminger, (*at left, bottom*,) chairman of the ASTM Subcommittee for Rotor Wing Light Sport Aircraft. Greg will present the second and third sessions personally. The introductory session on February 9 will be presented by CFI Mike Burton of Airgyro (*below*.) Start time for these sessions will be 8pm MST. An earlier session will be held at 8pm EST for participants in the eastern US.



All six scheduled webinars will feature formal presentations lasting a scheduled 20-30 minutes, followed by a period of question-and-answer from participants. Additional weeknight sessions may be scheduled in March.

It's important to note that there are only about 95 webcast connections, or "virtual seats," available for each of the webinars. All URA members were invited first by e-mail to reserve a seat. Remaining seats for the January webinar have now been opened to members of PRA or any of its participating chapters on a first-come, first-served basis.

Reserved seats for the business meetings will be held open until 10 minutes before the start of the meeting for any URA members who wish to attend in that manner. After that, connections will be made available to anyone, anywhere who's expressed an interest in attending online.

Before you reserve a virtual seat, please check first to make sure you have the necessary equipment, software and internet connection speed necessary to participate. (*See "Are You Equipped?" starting on page 1*.)

- -

Equipped? *(from page 1)*

...it should be equipped with muting for your outgoing mic, to prevent random noises in your local environment from causing dropouts in the audio of the presenter. A phone with an earphone or headset can also be used.

You'll need at least DSL and preferably a cable or fiber-optic connection, to participate. To see if your computer and internet connection have the right stuff, visit www.glance.net, click "Support" at the top of the page, then select "Can You Glance?" Near the top of the next page, click on "Join a live (automated) session now." A second window will open, displaying what's on the monitor of a test computer in Boston, Massachusetts. You'll see current EST displayed on the desktop's analog clock gadget in the upper right corner, and an inset frame with a slide show. (*Right, at top*.)

If graphics are not changing smoothly, and you're on a PC running Windows, try installing the Glance viewer, a small (400K) download available free on the "Can You Glance" page.

If another test is still sluggish, take the Speakeasy Speed Test under "Performance" on the "Can You Glance" page. When selecting the server for the test, use the New York City option for best simulation of the required connection to Boston. If you see a download speed of at least 200 kbps, you should be in good shape.

The results shown at right used a Utopia high-speed fiber-optic connection in the Salt Lake Valley. Note that upload speeds are often much more restricted than download. This is OK!

If you can't find the speed or equipment to participate live, try viewing the recordings of the sessions which will be posted on our website.

Not Toll-Free - The phone number for the meeting audio is NOT toll-free. If this season's test proves popular, we'll try and get a sponsor to cover costs for toll-free attendance in future webinars. If we're able to arrange an inexpensive audio streaming solution for attendees, allowing you to receive the audio on your computer, we'll let registered attendees know by e-mail. In the meantime, if you don't have a bulk long-distance plan, or free weekend long-distance on any of your phones, see if you can team up with a fellow enthusiast who does.

New Members - Recent applications include Glenn Kerr of Kearns, UT, who's about to take instruction at Airgyro and is looking for a single-place machine. Also new are Robert "Mac" McElroy of Amarillo, TX, Dennis DuBois of Battle Ground, WA and Claudius Klimt of Baltimore MD, a director of Carter Aviation Technology, all of whom wanted to support and be on board for the webinars. Welcome! As of our newsletter deadline, URA has 29 members in eight states.

URA, LLC – The Utah Rotorcraft Association is now a limited liability company, offering liability protection for the conduct of chapter business. Thanks to member Randall Wall for overseeing the process of applying with the state.

December Party

There was no business meeting held in December, but all URA members and guests were invited to the home of URA Secretary Paul and Cindy Plack in Murray, UT the evening of December 12th.

There were just four of us, but what a nice time! URA President Doug and Mary Barker made it in from Layton, UT, and shared a dinner (*above*) of broccoli salad, Honey Baked Ham, potato casserole, vegetables and a wide assortment of desserts including mini trifles and holiday fudge.

White Elephant Results – (*Above*:) Doug got a set of drink coasters patterned after aviation instruments; Mary got the white elephant seen in the December newsletter; Cindy got the lumbar massage cushion; and Paul got a neat P40 kite with 50” wingspan. El Mirage video was shown after the exchange, and the weather cooperated for the Barkers' drive home!

GNWSRA Election - The Great Northwest Sport Rotorcraft Association (PRA73, Oregon) will hold its annual election at the January 9 meeting. Bob Johnson has been nominated to repeat as President and Treasurer, and Jim Miller to repeat as VP. There is no published mention of nominees for Secretary. Nominations will be reopened for last-minute candidates before the vote is taken. The meeting will be held at the NWAAC Clubhouse at the Scappoose Airport.

Arizona 2010 Fly-In - The Arizona Rotorcraft Club (PRA15) has scheduled a Southwest Fly-In for April 17-18 at the San Manuel (E77) Airport. Note - this is a change from the preliminary March time frame announced at El Mirage in September. The URA website has been updated. Do the same for your calendars, and if you'd like to participate in a carpool to attend, contact URA President Doug Barker.

Nominees for 2010 offices are Britta Penca (*above, right*) for President, Carl Matter for VP, and Mark Rhoades (*above, left*) for Secretary/Treasurer. All are so far running unopposed, but write-ins will be accepted. Ballots have been sent to members in electronic and US postal mail, and must be completed and returned by January 15.

URA Dues - Joining in January costs just $12, covering through June 30, 2010. If you know someone who could benefit from staying in touch with our multi-state, personal rotorcraft community, tell him what a good deal it is!

Newsletter Changes – With this issue, our newsletter grows to eight pages, and will come in an envelope for protection against winter weather and post office sorting machines.

Get Started! Doug's Thoughts

URA President Doug Barker

How to get started into the world of Rotary Winged Flight! While everyone's dreams of flight are just a bit different, which means the goals will vary from one person to another, there are some steps along the way that will be similar for most people. I'd like to share some of the things I have learned along the way as I have pursued my dream of flight. Hopefully, you can use these insights to make your pathway shorter and less painful.

Step # 1 – Decide what kind of flying you really want to do. Do you want to travel or commute to places or are you more interested in just getting up into the air and flying around and possibly exploring new sights? Do you want to feel the wind going by and more closely duplicate the feeling of flying like a bird or do you want to be in an enclosed and possibly climate controlled cabin? Do you want to take others up with you on a regular basis or will you be doing most of your flying solo? And don't forget to ask yourself how much money you can realistically allocate to achieving this dream. Remember it will cost more to fly a 2 place machine than a single place machine and an enclosed cabin will add more weight and cost than an open air machine. What you want to have or have dreamed of having may need to be balanced against what you have to work with financially and concessions may be needed.

When you decide, take some time (a year may be reasonable) and get serious researching your options. Your goals should include:

(1) Join any local or national organizations that can help you learn more about the kind of flying you think you want to do. (EAA chapters, PRA chapters etc.) Attend meetings, read publications, and be as involved as you can in their activities in order to learn all you can from people already involved in the sport. Building relationships with people already doing what you want to do will increase your chances of getting into the air more than anything else you can do.

(2) Attend regional and national events where you can be exposed to a variety of rotorcraft and meet and build relationships with people well respected in that organization. Get introductory rides in as many different rotorcraft as possible. While this will cost some money to do, it will cost much less than obtaining a rotorcraft of your own and learning to fly it safely. If you cannot budget for this step, how will you come up with the money that will be required for the next step? Be honest with yourself and determine how important flying is to you. While there are some things you can do to minimize the cost of attending some events (like sharing rides & camping out instead of staying in hotels) it will still cost some money.

Be prepared to spend $50 to $100 per introductory flight lesson and to do as many different types of aircraft as you can (at least in the category you are interested in). If you skip this step, you could spend tens of thousands of dollars and years of time building or restoring an aircraft only to find you really don't enjoy flying it all that much.

(3) Get to know people that have the make and model of rotorcraft that you want to own. Ask about advantages and disadvantages, and what they might do differently if they had it to do again. Start watching for used machines for sale and get a feel for what the market is for the kind of machine you want to own so that you will know a good deal when you see one.

(4) Get to know the total costs associated with the type of aircraft you are most interested in. Insurance, hangar space, maintenance, and fuel costs will all add up and you need to be prepared or you may not end up flying your machine like you planned to. Shared ownership is one of the greatest ways to bring down the cost of owning an aircraft. This can be as simple as finding a partner and splitting the costs, or a bigger group to increase options or further shrink your initial capital expense.

Once you have done your "due diligence" and truly understand your options, you will be much more likely to make a decision that you will be happy with in the long run. There are always good opportunities that become available to the person who is truly prepared and ready to take advantage of them when they come up. But first, you have to decide what kind of machine best fits your desired flying style and get a feel for whether that is something that you can afford.

You will find talking to others who are a little farther down this road an invaluable resource to you. Enjoy the journey! - Doug

Industry News

The Phenix, a Spanish tractor gyro, Made its first flight Dec. 11. (Visit www.youtube.com, and enter "phenix autogyro" in the search box.) Phenix was unveiled at Aero Friedrichshafen in April as a static display. The machine was photographed there by Kai Bode, who posted these shots on the Rotary Wing Forum.

The machine has an unusual layout, which Kai explained: "Originally the motor was meant to sit behind the seats with a drive-shaft through the cockpit, but that didn't work out. In order to make use of the now required aft counter weight they installed a BRS. Volunteers for trying that one out please report to the manufacturer. Nice craftsmanship and an innovative concept."

The rotorhead is controlled using push-pull cables. Carlos Figuero of the Phenix team, who posts as "Phenix5" on the forum, says current plans include only factory-built machines, ruling out introduction in the US under current regulations. Carlos comments of the Phenix, "...this is our first tractor design and from what I have learnt and discovered, I will never build a pusher again!"

For now, the designers appear not to have a website. Watch for more details as this novel machine is developed further.

Bell Sells Off the 47! Bell Helicopter, a division of Textron, announced December 17 that Scott's Helicopter has assumed ownership of the Model 47 type certificate. The company says that beginning in the first quarter of 2010, all aspects of commercial spares support, technical support and continued airworthiness for the Bell 47H-1, 2H1 and 2H3 will become the responsibility of Scott's Helicopters, a Bell-approved Customer Service Facility located in Le Sueur, MN.

Danny Maldonado, senior vice president and chief services officer at Bell, said, "This model really started the commercial helicopter business and Bell has a lot of heritage in the 47. However, we felt it was the best thing for our customers, and the 47, to transition ongoing support to Scott's Helicopter and we have every confidence that Scott's will continue to provide outstanding service and support."

Since its inception in 1946, the Bell 47 has transformed aviation, and inspired a dedicated and loyal customer following. The manufacturer says Scott's brings a wealth of knowledge, experience and passion to this market. Bell will leave its name attached to the product; the model will be re-titled as "Scott's-Bell 47."

Bell says it continues to explore industry alliances with its worldwide network of approved Customer Service Facilities to improve the overall support and mission capabilities for its legacy products. (*Photo: ANN with permission*.)

West Coast Gyro History

Anyone who thinks the history of light sport gyroplanes in the western US began with Ken Brock or Groen Brothers may get a kick out of these artifacts from gyroplane history.

Chuck Vanek studied aviation in high school, but chose police work as a career, working as a beat cop in Portland, OR. When he saw pictures of Dr. Igor Bensen's first Bensen Gyrocopter, with its frame built of heavy water pipe, he was sure he could do better. By 1957 his welded, mild steel airframe, powered by a McCulloch drone engine, was in the air over the Scappoose Industrial Airport in Columbia County. By the following year, some friends had joined him (*below*.)

Club member in flight.

While Bensen used everything from Popular Mechanics ads to TV game show appearances to promote the Bensen Gyrocopter, Chuck was not passionate about marketing, and his machines remained largely unknown outside the Pacific Northwest. Lack of formal engineering credentials didn't deter Vanek from some notable achievements. He experimented with ducted fans around 1959, and built something he called his "flying ring," a powered-lift vehicle using a McCulloch engine and ducted fan, which received mention in Jane's All The World Book of Aircraft History.

In the 1960s, while Bensen was telling followers a two-place Gyrocopter was not feasible with current technology, Vanek was building one, and going flying with his young son, Jim. As Bensen owners perfected hand-starting their rotors, or experimented with a series of small auxiliary engines to start their blades, Vancraft pilots were using Chuck's novel, lightweight, hand-crank prerotator, developed from a 90º gearset sourced from a Maytag ringer washing machine.

The Vancraft era reached its zenith in the mid-1980s, as son Jim developed jigs which made serial production of Vancraft gyros faster and more consistent.

In 1985, Chuck flew at Oshkosh with his wife in a two-place Vancraft gyro using VW power, and was awarded EAA's Lindbergh Award for Rotorcraft. By the time Chuck decided to close his business over liability concerns in 1988, Vancraft sales had peaked at 30 per month.

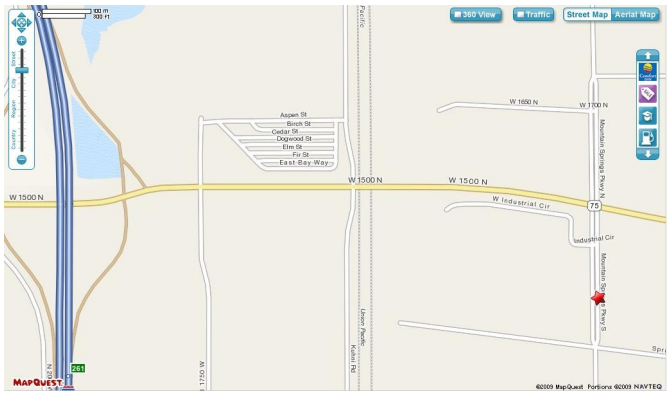
Three years later, in 1991, Jim Vanek launched Sport Copter, selling single-place gyroplanes with bolted aluminum construction displacing his father's welded steel.

Vancraft "Rotor Lightnings" still turn up every so often in basements and barns across the Pacific Northwest. Chuck Vanek was honored as a "Gyroplane Pioneer" by New York's Hofstra University in April 2003. He succumbed to a lengthy illness on Fathers Day, 2007, but not before marveling at his son's Sport Copter II prototype, a new chapter in the family business.

Vintage photo courtesy Sport Copter archives.
Next month – a full 1962 Vancraft newsletter!

January Meeting Directions

Join us Saturday, January 9 at 10am MST in the conference room at the headquarters of DTI, 1180 N. Mountain Springs Pkwy, Springville, UT 84663. Our meeting is moving here from the airport to take advantage of the reliable high-speed internet service needed to conduct our first webinar. The business meeting itself will be conducted online using the same hookup created for the webinars, but please attend in person if you can, to conserve internet connections for those beyond a reasonable driving distance. The webinar will follow the meeting at 11am.



From I-15: Exit 261, toward Springville/Provo. Turn EAST onto W 1500 N, Utah State Road 75. Continue 0.7 miles.
Turn RIGHT onto Mountain Springs Parkway, continue 0.2 miles; follow double-back to your LEFT, continue another 0.1 miles.

DTI is a large building on the right. There should be plenty of parking in the lot on a Saturday. The building features a card-entry security system, so please arrive by 9:50am MST, otherwise we may not be able to send someone to open the door once the meeting starts. The conference room is located on the second floor.

ROTR Update

Rotors Over The Rockies 2010 is coming, June 10-12 at the Brigham City Airport. This location will offer much more in the way of amenities than our previous location at West Desert Airpark in Fairfield, and significantly shorten the drive for many attendees and exhibitors, but will also require some additional work on our part. The city is welcoming our meet as part of its annual airport open house, which guarantees us a great opportunity to expose our sport to the public on Saturday, June 12.

Among the activities we're pulling together is a fly-in breakfast for all area pilots, but specifically inviting rotorcraft. This could result in the largest gathering of small helicopters ever seen in the region. We'll need volunteers to work the event for a few hours that morning, and perhaps to participate in an orientation/training session beforehand. We'll also need some volunteers to do the cooking and serving, and to assist arriving pilots. There will be chairs and tables to set up and take down, trash bags to change out, and more. You may find it difficult to relate flipping pancakes to making your dreams of flight a reality, but the success of this event and URA will play a part in determining the availability and cost of training and other resources in our area. Please do what you can!

Almost any photo or video from ROTR 2010 will feature stunning mountain backdrops, but it's not clear yet how, or how quickly, we can share them on the internet. There is no publicly available, high-speed internet on the airport at this time.

AT&T and Verizon both claim 3G coverage at the airport; Sprint and T-Mobile claim only wireless voice service. (Based on each company's published coverage maps as of 12/11/09.)

Aviation-related attractions in the area include Hill Air Force Base, and its museum. Officials at Hill have been unable to approve our request for special permission to fly into the base for an organized base tour during ROTR, but will welcome us if we'd like to arrive by ground transportation. Thursday, June 10 is a day the tours are normally offered, and we've been told we can get a tour of whatever non-classified operations we want if we request in advance. The base museum is open to the public every day during ROTR, for those who'd like to see it on their own.

As soon as we get past the winter webinars, our website's home page will be devoted to ongoing updates on ROTR. If you believe you can help, whether its in an area already identified as a need or an area we haven't identified, please don't be shy. This event is only in its third year, and already 2010 hold the promise of matching Mentone or Bensen Days in size and impact!

The monthly URA Newsletter is edited by Paul Plack, and your submissions are welcome. Contact Paul at secretary@utahrotorcraft.org.