

# MSO GA NEWS



New leadership in MSO administration. [Read more](#)



Say What!? Shakespeare and a new airport logo. [Read more](#)



South Concourse Terminal construction nears exciting finish! [Read more](#)



Montana State Aviation Conference in Missoula March 3-5. [Read more](#)



Santa flies again! Red Sleighs Over Montana 2021. [Read more](#)



Missoula CAP's Pete Graf gives statewide guidance, plus squadron update. [Read more](#)



AOPA's STEM curriculum adopted at Sentinel High School. [Read more](#)

**An Old Fashioned  
Forest Service Christmas**

National Museum of Forest Service History  
6305 Highway 10 West, Missoula  
(one mile west of Missoula Airport)

**Saturday ~ November 27, 2021**  
**Noon - 3 pm**

- Visit Santa Claus
- Free horse drawn wagon rides
- Do the Snow Pants Dance
- Snap a picture with Smokey & Woody Owl
- Play the Scavenger Hunt and win a prize
- Gather Around the Campfire & sing songs
- Shop in the Ranger Station for special gifts
- Sip Hot Chocolate and Munch Candy Canes

Made possible by:









Donations welcome! For further information, please contact our office at 406-541-6374

Come to the Party! National Museum of Forest Service History. [Read more](#)



What it's like to fly in Switzerland – a Missoula pilot reports. [Read more](#)



Shorts – Flight training, Neptune, EAA, weather cam, MM2N book, Farmer's Market (!). [Read more](#)

## New Leadership at MSO

MSO GA News



Missoula Airport Deputy Director Tim Damrow (L) and Director Brian Ellestad (R) stand in front of the new terminal South Concourse. MSO GA News photo

The Missoula Montana Airport continues to be a place of striking growth and progressive change thanks to its administration, staff, and the Airport Authority Board. The many years of effective leadership by

Director Cris Jensen and Deputy Director Brian Ellestad will continue under the leadership of a dynamic duo with lots of experience here. Brian was selected as Director in July by the Airport Board, after having served for several months as Acting Director after Cris left the Director position in April. Brian's new partner in leadership is Tim Damrow, selected as Deputy Director by the Board in September.

Brian began his position as MSO Deputy Director in November, 2010 and played a key role in growing air service in Missoula. His experience with different roles in airline operations prior to his coming to

Missoula gave him a background that enabled continued growth in expanding airline services here. The airport is far busier than in the past... more airlines, more destinations, more passengers. Continued growth in air travel is returning after times of pandemic-induced travel reductions.

As reported by Martin Kidston, *Missoula Current*, September 20, 2010 Tim has served a lead role in overseeing construction of the new terminal. He's originally from Helena and a graduate of the University of Montana. He's worked in aviation for the past 15 years, most recently spending 6 years with Allegiant Air in Las Vegas. Tim's a private pilot and certified as an unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) operator. He looks forward to building his own aircraft (maybe one of the RVs) when his schedule and circumstances allow.

There's lots of exciting new development at MSO. It's great to have the experienced and capable leadership of Brian and Tim as part of the dedicated team that continues to make our airport an asset for all of us in western Montana.

*MSO*

## From Dan's Desk

By Dan Neuman, MSO Business Development Mgr.



The new MSO airport logo.  
Graphic courtesy of Dan Neuman

What's in a name? In Act-II, Scene-II of Shakespeare's play, Romeo and Juliet, Juliet says this phrase in reference to the family name of Romeo....

*"That which we call a rose / by any other*

*name would smell as sweet."* That saying has been popularized (shortened and put into regular people's English) to "A rose by any other name is still a rose".

So, what does this really mean and what in the heck does it have to do with the Airport? Well, if you were paying attention (instead of napping like me) at the August 2021 Board Meeting, you might have noticed that the Board adopted a resolution to update the Airport's branding and logo. This was the result of a process started in 2017 and culminated in a recommendation that the airport be rebranded as the "Missoula Montana Airport". (The previous

"international" designation was not representative of current Airport operations.) The rebranded name will also help support search engine optimization for individuals exploring travel to Montana. In addition, the Airport logo and color scheme have been updated and modernized to align with the new South Concourse Terminal design elements.

While that all appears to be simple and straightforward, a peek behind the curtain would show you that the Airport staff spent a considerable amount of energy thinking this decision through. After all, our name should tell people who we are and what we do right? Not only that, but it should also be easy for people to find us. Besides, we got tired of disappointing people trying to book non-stop, international flights out of Missoula. To quote the great English bard once more "Expectation is the root of all heartache".

(Dan's Desk Continued on page 4)



## New Terminal Nears Completion

MSO GA News

Since we last reported, significant progress has been made on the “South Concourse” phase of construction at the airport. In addition, the improved airport roadways, parking lot and exit plaza have been completed and are open for use. There will be a ribbon cutting event on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022 (2-22-2022) with full building operations beginning a little later towards the middle of April. The South Concourse is “State of the Art” in many ways. Some of the new opportunities were described in the spring issue of MSO GA News <https://admin.flymissoula.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/GA-newsletter-Spring-2021.pdf>

As noted in the spring newsletter construction update on the airport web site <https://flymissoula.com/construction> “Design is well underway for the second phase (East Concourse) of the terminal expansion project and being evaluated for financial and operational feasibility.” The South Concourse will provide full service for airport operations until the existing “old terminal” is deconstructed and replaced by the East Concourse, which will connect with the South Concourse. The airport is estimating that both project phases should be completed in 2025. ✈️



November 2021 – South Concourse Holdrooms. Passengers will be surrounded by Missoula’s scenic views.



October 2021 – South Concourse Aerial. *Photo courtesy of Tim Damrow.*

## Santa Flies Again

MSO GA News and Eric Komberec, President, Museum of Mountain Flying

Red Sleighs Over Montana took place in early December of 2020 as a project of the Museum of Mountain Flying. There was a sense that a valuable boost would be provided by bringing a truly unique and special seasonal event to Montana communities facing disruptions due to the pandemic and economic stress. Project organizers identified nearly twenty (20) isolated communities throughout Western Montana with limited economic resources. Volunteers worked with these rural communities to identify “families in need” as well as others to meet the aerial “sleighs” and greet their Santa passengers. The aim was to create a unique experience that youngsters would see as a dream come true. Organizers found sponsors and purchased gifts. They recruited local “pilots turned Santa Claus” and “elves” who were able to fly to these communities delivering gifts of clothing, blankets, and toys to approximately 1000 children. Fourteen pilots donated their time, energy, and all aircraft expenses for the gift delivery.

Last year’s inaugural event was described in the spring issue of *MSO GA News* (find it on the airport web site) and was widely recognized by news media. The communities visited by Santa and his elves expressed great appreciation and the children themselves had wonderful times meeting the aircraft and receiving the truly special delivery of gifts. The Museum will make it an annual endeavor, expanding into eastern Montana and Northern Idaho communities depending upon available aviation resources. Plans are to add Hot Springs, Darby, and a few others to the list of communities visited. More planes and helicopters will added as sleighs. ✈️



Pilot Art Dykstra and Santa Dave Bretz were one of the December, 2020 Red Sleighs. *John Haines photo*

## Montana Aviation Conference



Attendees visit the Neptune exhibit at the 2018 Montana Aviation Conference in Missoula. MSO GA News photo

The annual Montana Aviation Conference will be held **March 3 – March 5, 2022** at the Holiday Inn Missoula Downtown Missoula. The Conference brings together Montana's aviation community for three days of speakers, seminars, workshops, business meetings, and social events. It is an opportunity for those from all facets of Montana aviation to enjoy being together, learn from each other, and discuss issues of mutual concern. The Montana Aviation Conference has around 500 participants each year. Missoula was last the conference site in 2018.

Keynote speakers entertain at the Thursday Kickoff Luncheon, Friday dinner, and Saturday

*(Dan's Desk Continued from page 2)*

Anyone that has ever ready this column before knows that my mind works in strange and mysterious ways. For the uninitiated, that means that I often

banquet. They are aviation adventurers and/or book authors and always have great stories to tell. Concurrent speakers present topics of interest to pilots and aviation enthusiasts, who can choose among many options. One of the speakers will be the Missoula area's CFI Kurt Kleiner who will give programs on Density Altitude and Temporary Flight Restrictions. Exhibitors from a great variety of aviation vendors display their latest offerings: Avionics, maintenance, services. Aviation organizations provide updates on their activities.

Special events include a Thursday evening showing of *Return to the Big Skies* produced by Missoula's own documentary film producer, Eric Ristau. On Friday afternoon, busses will provide transportation to the Missoula Airport for a time of socializing, sharing a beer or two, and viewing some remarkable aircraft. During this time, and at other times during the conference, there will be opportunities for attendees to tour the by then newly completed terminal building, the "South Concourse."

The annual Montana Aviation Conference is hosted by the Aviation Organizations of Montana (AOM). The AOM is organized in the state of Montana to promote all facets of aviation in the state, as well as act as the steering committee for the annual Montana Aviation Conference. The AOM member organizations include the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA), Civil Air Patrol (CAP), Montana Airport Management Association (MAMA), Montana Pilots Association (MPA), Montana 99s (99s), and others.

Conference web link for information and registration: **[2022 Montana Aviation Conference](#)**



make comparisons that are obscure and frivolous. This is not one of those times though. Namely, this is a straightforward case of branding the Airport with a name that is truly reflective of our identity.

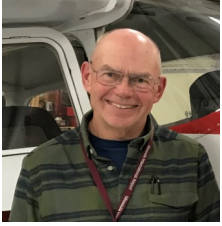


# Get Out and Fly!



## Missoula Pilot Pete Graf is an Anchor for Missoula's CAP Squadron

MSO GA News and Pete Graf



Retired USAF and Delta Airlines pilot Pete Graf provides key support not only for Missoula's CAP squadron but statewide. MSO GA News photo

Pete Graf is a Missoula pilot retired from careers with both the U.S. Air Force and SkyWest Airlines. He began flying at Missoula's Johnson-Bell Field in 1970 and will be the recipient of the prestigious FAA Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award on 27 December, recognizing lifelong achievement as an aviator. Pete has more than 18,000 flying hours.


Pete's contributions to Montana aviation include having taught at the Montana Search Pilot Clinic for 17 years, 14 years as ground instructor of ELT understanding and tracking, and the last three as a search pilot instructor. He is now a key provider of guidance and instruction for CAP pilots around the state. Here are his roles:

- Assistant Director of Operations (DO), responsible for all ground and flying operations in the state
- Standardization and Evaluation Officer (DOV), serving as the chief pilot and standards setter/maintainer, primary instructor, and check pilot for the state
- Mission Check Pilot Examiner (MCPE), qualified to fly all CAP search missions and to check others in their mission pilot duties. Pete has donated more than 500 instructional sorties since becoming CAP instructor in 1999.
- Senior Flight Release Officer (SFRO). Each CAP flight must be "released" by a designated person not on the flight. The SFRO must have 1000 hours and an instrument certificate and is allowed to

approve a flight into low weather or short runways.

- Small, unmanned aircraft systems Part 107 (sUAS). The CAP has some Unmanned Aerial Systems (drones) throughout the state, and they too need to have a release to be flown. His UAV license qualifies Pete for that as well.
- Incident Commander Level 3 (IC3). Pete is one of two IC3s in the state. CAP's IC standards are not as stringent as those of the Forest Service but Pete can lead/direct/supervise a large search mission. Fortunately, Montana has few large searches. They are mostly small and require supervision by an IC3 with fewer assets.

Pete was selected from more than 100 CAP instructor pilots to provide 6 hours of Red Bird simulator and 7.5 hours of flight training in a CAP Cessna 182 to two Air Force airman, a Sergeant and a First Lieutenant. The instruction was part of the Air Force's Rated Preparatory Program (RPP) and was conducted in Denton TX in March 2021. It was the first of two programs this year and is designed to help airman qualify for flying training slots in the Air Force. The Air Force has documented that RPP, entering its fourth year in 2022, is very successful at preparing diverse groups of airmen for flying careers, and CAP is proud to play a key role in this expanding program.

Missoula's Civil Air Patrol Composite Squadron is fortunate to have Pete available at its home airport. He stays in touch with the squadron's activities, attending Tuesday weekly meetings at Ft Missoula Military Museum beginning at 1800 hours. 

## Civil Air Patrol: *Semper Vigilans* . . . Always Vigilant

By Lynn Sainsbury, Deputy Commander for Cadets

Eighty years ago, on December 1st, 1941, six days before the attack on Pearl Harbor that launched the United States into WWII, Civil Air Patrol (CAP) was founded. The origins of CAP date back to 1936, when Gill Robb Wilson, World War I aviator, returned from Germany convinced of impending war. Early in 1941, Wilson launched his perfected program: the Civil Air Defense Services (CADS), which later in the year

became Civil Air Patrol.

In January 1942, German submarines began attacking merchant vessels along the East Coast. With the military unable to respond in force, CAP established coastal patrol flights to deter, report and prevent enemy operations. From March 1942 through

(CAP Continued on page 6)

*(CAP Continued from page 5)*

August 1943, armed CAP aircraft at 21 coastal patrol bases extending from Maine to the Mexican border atrolled the waters off the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. Their success in thwarting submarine attacks and safeguarding shipping lanes led President Franklin D. Roosevelt, on April 29, 1943, to transfer CAP from the Office of Civilian Defense to the Department of War.

CAP's male and female volunteers engaged in an array of other wartime missions. These included aircraft warning, southern liaison patrol duty along the Mexican border, courier service, missing aircraft searches, disaster relief, tow target and tracking operations, forest patrols and many others.

Over the decades CAP changed with the times, and the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, ushered in a new era of homeland defense. The following day, a CAP Cessna 172, the only nonmilitary aircraft allowed in the nation's airspace, provided emergency management officials the first high-resolution images of the World Trade Center site.

With the creation of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, CAP received new technologies for its emergency services, including hyperspectral imaging, improved airborne communication, forward-looking infrared systems, GPS-equipped glass cockpit avionics and geospatial information interoperability. CAP aircrews train alongside government officials and military personnel in air defense intercept missions, communication exercises and cybersecurity and even simulate unmanned aircraft to provide imagery training support for deploying forces.

At its establishment, CAP made no provision for the participation of youth. On Oct. 1, 1942, CAP

leaders issued a memorandum creating the CAP Cadet Program for boys and girls ages 15 to 18. The cadet program proved to be a powerful force for imparting practical skills and preparing teenagers for the military and other wartime service agencies. Today cadets aged 12-21 make up nearly half of the 56,955 members nationwide.

The Missoula Composite Squadron is composed of both senior members (adults) and cadets (teens). Senior members primarily work on Emergency Service (ES) flying missions and training, as well as mentoring the cadets. Cadets are involved in Leadership, Aerospace, and ES ground teams. Several cadets are aviation enthusiasts and two are licensed pilots, both having completed their private pilot's certification through the CAP's Wings program, which provides funding for flight training. Another cadet is currently working on his pilot's certificate. Other flight training funding programs also available to CAP cadets, include the Air Force's HIGH scholarship which provides a free, three-week long training opportunity in the summer. A 10-day academy held in summer offers inexpensive powered, glider and balloon flights where cadets are guaranteed at least 10 hours of flight instruction. Both of these programs provide room, board and camaraderie as well as flight time. Additionally, all CAP cadets who earn their first stripe, are eligible to complete 5 front-seat Orientation Flights, where CAP pilots teach an approved curriculum during a 1-hour flight, and unlimited backseat O-flights!

We invite anyone (especially aspiring cadets) interested in aviation, leadership, and search & rescue to come check us out! Meetings are held weekly at the Ft Missoula Military History Museum on Tuesdays from 6 to 8:30 pm.



Photo Left: The Missoula Composite Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol took part in this year's observance of 9/11, at Rose Park in Missoula. L to R: Squadron Commander Captain Jim Meixner, C/TSgt Dodge, C/A1C Goodman, C/Amn Grimsley, C/SSgt Elliott, C/A1C Vimish Singh-Search, C/SMSgt Hiltz, C/CMSgt Apuzzo, C/2ndLt Sedgwick. Facebook photo

## Missoula High School Teacher Adopts AOPA STEM Curriculum

By Burt Caldwell



Sentinel High School engineering instructor Joe Yakawich (L) with Burt Caldwell (R) in Sentinel's bright and well-equipped instruction area. *MSO GA News photo*


In 2017 when I was working with AOPA about bringing one of their fly-ins to Missoula, I was told about a 4-year program AOPA was developing for high school students to teach science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) through an aviation-based curriculum. As conversations about a fly-in progressed, I continued following up with AOPA on a fairly regular basis for progress reports on the development of the STEM program. As the program progressed, it appeared to me to be something the aviation industry needed, and one from which the students in Montana could benefit.

About a year and a half ago I started discussions with a number of people in Missoula about the possibility of starting the AOPA STEM program in the Missoula High Schools. At the time, only approximately 70 high schools around the country (most in the east and south) were trying it. One of the meetings I had included Mark Thane, the former Superintendent of Missoula County Public Schools. Thane liked the idea and introduced me to Robert Watson, the current Superintendent of MCPS. Rob and I met in person a short time later at a City Club event and started discussions. Then, Covid! As we

continued our conversations over Zoom, he introduced me to two of his staff (Elise Guest, Curriculum Director; and Kasey Dirnberger, Career and Technical Education Programs Coordinator) with whom he said I should continue exploring this idea. I began sending all three of them multiple AOPA articles on where and how this was being taught as well as articles noting the substantial need in the aviation industry over the next 15 years for, not only pilots, but mechanics, Air Traffic Controllers, and drone pilots – approximately one million opportunities are estimated to come available.

This effort has been rewarded with the selection of Joe Yakawich, a teacher at Sentinel High School. Joe teaches a 4-year curriculum in engineering beginning with the freshman year. The AOPA STEM curriculum is incorporated during the sophomore year. One of Joe's students has earned his private pilot certificate and others are currently taking instruction. Joe attended AOPA's training class (virtually, due to Covid), and a pilot class (no pun intended) being started this year (2021). The AOPA STEM curriculum at Sentinel High is the only one of its kind in Montana. Only 300 schools currently use it nationwide. The aviation field is wide open with far more opportunities in the future than students in the program so far.

Since this class was announced as available only a few short weeks before school started, work continues with student changing class schedules to attend, making the student body and the community aware of its existence, and generating enthusiasm for the continuation of the class next year and beyond as well as, hopefully, putting it in additional schools.

*Burt Caldwell is an exceptionally energetic aviation enthusiast who almost single-handedly convinced AOPA there needed to be a regional fly-in at Missoula. The result was the 2018 fly-in at MSO. Burt nourishes a continuing, strong interest in Missoula general aviation.* 

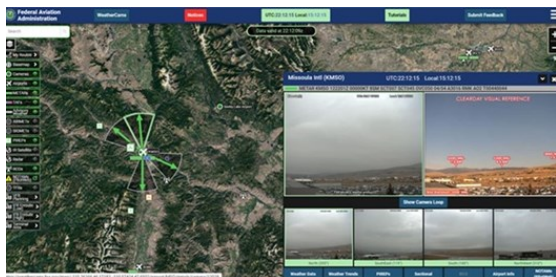


**Fly the Big Sky license plates** are now available through regular county motor vehicle licensing departments. For each license purchased, EAA Chapter 517 receives \$20 to further its activities promoting aviation. The additional cost for the specialty plate with standard numbers is about \$30, and for the personalized plate about \$60. Plates can be ordered at any time without affecting the renewal cycle. Standard renewal rates apply, with the specialty plate cost being added.



## MSO NEWS SHORT TOPICS

### New! Live weather cam!



Screenshot of the MSO weather cam.

MSO staff collaborated with Montana Aeronautics to install live weather cameras. It's the first commercial airport in the state to have them. Comments from appreciative pilots note how helpful they are in getting a complete picture of MSO weather. Click on METAR and get both the raw and plain text. The cameras give four different, current views from the airport. Clicking on any one of them gives an enlarged view along with the comparable view on a clear day. <https://weathercams.faa.gov/>



Missoula CFI Aaron Foster instructs humans and canines in his Citabria. *Photo courtesy of Aaron*

### Flight training at MSO

CFI Aaron Foster now provides instruction for tail wheel, back country flying, and spin/upset recovery in his 160HP 1997 Citabria 7GCBC. More information can be found at [flyfosteraviation.com](http://flyfosteraviation.com) Aaron can be reached at: [fosteraviation.mt@gmail.com](mailto:fosteraviation.mt@gmail.com) (406) 493-5986



Neptune never rests. Maintenance fills all the time outside the fire seasons. *Photo courtesy of Kevin Condit*

### Neptune never rests

Neptune Aviation's tanker fleet is making its way back to Missoula for Winter Maintenance. Currently 6 out of 9 tankers have returned to Missoula. T02, T12 and T41 are still deployed (depending on Mother Nature, they should be back in Missoula by the end of November). It was a busy fire season for Neptune, here are some of the highlights:

- T40 flew the most missions this season – dropping more than 1,250,000 gallons of retardant while flying on 417 missions
- T41 isn't far behind T40 – as of today, T41 has dropped more than 1,070,00 gallons of retardant while flying on 358 missions
- Neptune's entire fleet dropped more than 6,900,000 gallons of retardant while flying on more than 2,300 missions

There is no “off season” for Neptune Aviation, each tanker will undergo an extensive maintenance program in the upcoming months (including updating the paint scheme on 3 more tankers. Check out Neptune's Facebook & Instagram pages for more photos of the work being done on the tankers this winter. *Thanks to Kevin Condit, Neptune's Director of Marketing, for the report.*



(Shorts Continued from page 8)

## New billing system for landing fees

Landing fees?!! No worries, aircraft that are based in Missoula and aircraft that weigh less than 12,500 pounds pay no landing fees, as has always been the case. Others may notice an unexpected billing from Vector Airport Systems, LLC (“Vector”). Beginning November 1, Vector will begin billing and collecting General Aviation (“GA”) landing fees on behalf of the airport. There is no change in policy; instead of receiving a bill from MSO for landing fees the bill will be received from Vector.

For more information, see the note at the top of the airport’s General Aviation page <https://flymissoula.com/general-aviation> and the “[click here](#) for additional information” link on that page.



Ray Aten, Missoula EAA Chapter 517 Young Eagles Coordinator (middle), receives his national award at the 2021 EAA AirVenture Oshkosh national fly-in. Photo from EAA national's web site

## Five Valleys Flyers, EAA Chapter 517, Inc.

The Chapter’s annual meeting was an enjoyable gathering at its hangar in the East LZ complex at MSO. Pizza and conversation were followed by a formal meeting, which included a report about the Young Eagles program of EAA. Youth are given opportunities to experience an introductory airplane ride with a volunteer pilot. Young Eagles coordinator Ray Aten received national recognition at National EAA’s July 2021 Air Venture for his exceptional accomplishments. Other meeting business included the usual reports along with the observation that the Chapter’s facilities, operations, and activities are robust and healthy.

The first Saturday of every month will be a continuing occasion for gatherings at the Chapter hangar for conversation, coffee, and donuts. All persons interested in aviation are heartily invited to attend. Meetings are the third Monday of every month and feature entertaining and informative programs. The Chapter publishes an excellent newsletter, which along with lots of other information can

be found here: [www.eaa517.org](http://www.eaa517.org) The Chapter can also be followed on Facebook.



## Every Reason to Fail

Bryan Douglass’ book about the epic adventure of Miss Montana to Normandy is absolutely a “must read” for aviators, especially those of us sharing a base with the historic DC-3. Bryan’s story creates in the reader a deep appreciation for a number of things: The success of a near-impossible effort to make the aircraft flyable in less than a year’s time and starting with zero resources; the rarely seen volunteer energy that showed up again and again to do the work; the rich relationships among the Miss Montana crew that flourished because of their sharing of an epic adventure; the physical and performance challenges involved in participating with many DC-3s never before together as a group and called upon to skillfully execute a “one-shot-only” D-Day Seventy Fifth Anniversary performance. The historical accounts included in the book, Mann Gulch, WWII, the Berlin Airlift, give added value. **Every Reason to Fail** can be purchased on Amazon. Bryan will sell an

autographed copy for \$20. Contact him at [bryan@everyreasontofail.com](mailto:bryan@everyreasontofail.com)

## MSO presence at Farmer’s Market!

Two Johnsons with big roles at MSO also have roots elsewhere... in their gardens! They and their bountiful produce can be found seasonally at the Clark Fork Market in downtown Missoula, and at the Missoula Winter Market. Pilots know Jesse Johnson as the airport’s Compliance Officer and go-to guy for

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*(Shorts Continued from page 9)*

airport access badges. He and his wife, Chuad, own Johnson's Homegrown, a highly productive gardening operation in Missoula. Josh Johnson is known to Missoula pilots as a pilot and Director of Ground Operations at Minuteman. He and his fiancée, Shelby Shively, own Carlton Creek Organic near Florence. Visit the Johnsons in their off-airport roles and reward yourself with the best produce ever!



Jesse and Chuad at the Missoula Farmer's Market. *Facebook photo*



Josh and Shelby with their egg producers. *Photo courtesy of Josh*

## Advisories from Spokane Approach

VFR pilots inbound to MSO from the west may find it helpful to request traffic advisories from Spokane Approach, 124.9. IFR and VFR approaches from the west to Runway 12 and departures to the west from Runway 30 are restricted by terrain that concentrates traffic in narrow corridors. Your *News* Editor has found approach controllers responsive and helpful and has on some occasions been alerted to potential traffic conflicts that may not have been seen. Getting ATIS when about 30 miles out and then contacting Spokane Approach seems to work well. Approach will typically advise the switch to Missoula Tower when about 10 miles out.

## Airport weather and conditions

- ATIS phone line. 406-549-2989. Call in to get ATIS when you're away from a radio.
- ASOS (Automated Surface Observing System). 406-728-3743. MSO weather 24/7.
- After the tower closes, ASOS weather is available by radio at 126.65.

Talk to a real person. 406-329-4840. The staff at our local National Weather Service office is always glad to visit with pilots about weather and can often clarify uncertainties in a forecast.

## Airport access badges

- Check your badge renewal date. It expires every two years, on your birthday.
- It can be renewed anytime within the 30 days before your birthday. There is no "grace period" after the renewal date.
- Badge renewals are \$20; new badges \$25

*(Shorts Continued on page 11)*



## The National Museum of Forest Service History

MSO GA News

The Museum is a unique neighbor for the Missoula Montana Airport! Not only is it right next door, its artifacts and stories include many of aviation interest. The aviation history of Missoula and that of the Forest Service are closely intertwined. The Museum campus is a perfect nearby attraction for visitors and residents alike. Join the fun on November 27<sup>th</sup> when the Museum hosts a holiday celebration.

The Museum has for several years been involved in planning and fundraising for a world class facility featuring state of the art exhibits that will invite the participation of viewers. There has never before been one central location where people can enjoy the history of America's signature forests and grasslands conservation agency.

As noted on the Museum's web site: "The green building design of the Center will showcase the Forest Service's contributions to renewable resource conservation and education and will be a model green building for the Missoula community, the state of Montana, and the nation." The goal of raising \$11 million for construction is 80% complete. Meanwhile, the Museum campus is an enjoyable visit with its variety of historic structures and displays.

*(Shorts Continued from page 10)*

Compliance Officer Jesse Johnson handles badging procedures and is available for badging 10am-3pm Mon, Tues, Thurs, and Fri. These are the days where appointments can be made online at: <http://flymissoula.com/badging>

\*Please do not assume we are able to attend to walk-ins. Other duties are taken care of outside of the badging office when appointments are not made.

\*Please keep in mind that it is a lot easier to accommodate requests if you call or email ahead of time. This way I can adjust my schedule. Admin. Office phone: 728-4381 [jjohnson@flymissoula.com](mailto:jjohnson@flymissoula.com)

\*The appointment scheduler for badging allows us to make sure we get all the information out to each applicant so they have the proper forms, knows about the ID requirements, and gets their signatory to OK the paperwork prior to coming over to the office for badging.

Moving?! PLEASE let your sponsoring FBO or hangar association managers know! They are required to report changes in hangar occupancy within 24 hours of the change. It is now the sponsor's (signatory's) responsibility to: a) Let the Airport Public Safety Office know within 24 hours of any move; b) Ensure that the AOA badge is turned in to the Airport within 30 days. The sponsor (not the badge holder, though the sponsor may attempt to collect from the badge holder) may receive a monetary fine if either the 24-hour notification or the badge return is not done.



### Montana airports with loaner cars

From MPA Heading Bug November/December 2021

The Montana Aeronautics Division uses a portion of its revenue to help provide courtesy cars at Montana airports with limited taxi and ride share options. Right now, Aeronautics is working with MDOT Legal Services to establish Administrative Rules to clarify Courtesy Car grants. These rules are now open to public comment and

airport car sponsors have been invited to provide comment to: Airport/ Airways Bureau, MDOT, Box 200507, Helena, Montana, 59620-0507 or e-mail [mmckee@mt.gov](mailto:mmckee@mt.gov), no later than 5 pm December 3, 2021.

So far, MT Aeronautics has provided surplus cars or grants toward the purchase of cars at: Anaconda, Baker, Big Timber, Colstrip, Columbus, Cut Bank, Deer Lodge, Ekalaka, Ennis, Eureka, Forsyth, Fort Benton, Fort Peck, Hardin, Hot Springs, Lewistown, Libby, Lincoln, Malta, Miles City, Philipsburg, Plains, Polson, Ronan, Roundup, St. Ignatius, Superior, Thompson Falls, Townsend, and Winifred. Pilots flying into these areas have the opportunity to use ground transportation for business and pleasure, which enhances local economies, and can be a safety and comfort factor in the event of weather or mechanical delays.

*MSO GA News has the good fortune of having received an excellent account of general aviation flying in Switzerland, by private pilot John Rohrer. John now lives in California and has a residence in Missoula and a hangar at MSO and expects to return. His story highlights the differences, both in destinations and in procedures, between flying here and flying in Europe. We know you'll enjoy reading his story. -Ed*

## Flying in Switzerland

By John Rohrer

Our family recently returned from a five-year assignment in Basel, Switzerland, where my wife, Michelle, was working at Roche's headquarters. Having never lived abroad, my goal was to convert my FAA license to an EASA license, and to go flying! That goal was immensely more difficult and more rewarding than I could have imagined. I'll save the license conversion for a future article and focus on what it's like to fly GA in Switzerland.



*Motorfluggruppe Frikta club hangar*

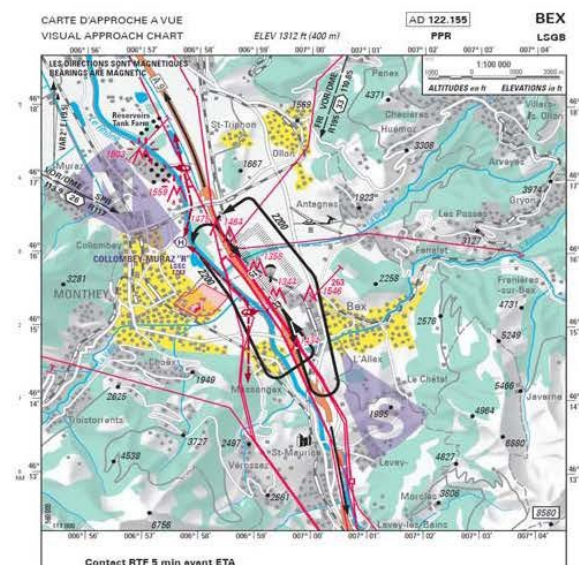
By luck, the big flight school in Zürich placed me at a small flight school for the "flying" part of my conversion training. The school was based at Fricktal-Schupfart Airport (LSZI), a beautiful, 1,700 ft grass strip on top of a 1,788 ft elevation hill surrounded by farmland. After my conversion was complete, I joined the Motorfluggruppe Frikta flight club ([www.mfgf.ch](http://www.mfgf.ch)) at LSZI; then I had access to eight different aircraft: two Piper Cadets, two Piper Archers, a Piper Arrow, a Diamond DA40, a Tecnam 2008 JC, and a PA18-150 Super Cub which was the last ever built. The flight club's hangar was chockablock with aircraft, with several lifts to store aircraft in the rafters. If the plane you booked was on a lift, you'd better arrive 30 minutes early to move all the other aircraft and get it down!

What does it cost to rent these beauties? I only flew the Cadet (\$265/hr), the Archer (\$300/hr), and the Super Cub (\$250/hr); wet prices, air time only. At least the taxi and run-up is free!

Like most GA airports in Switzerland, LSZI is privately owned and operated by the flight clubs on the field. Therefore, nearly all Swiss GA airports are "Restricted," and transient aircraft need "Prior Permission" to land or

takeoff. Pilots must call or e-mail the airport a day or two in advance to get landing permission. Permission is usually granted, but I have seen some aircraft/pilots blacklisted at some airfields. If you're discourteous while on the field, or you don't obey noise abatement procedures, you may find that your next permission request is denied!

Additionally, airport operators often try to placate complaining neighbors by restricting pattern work and hours of operation. For instance, at Reichenbach Airport, you will find a note in the VFR Manual: "No TKOF BTN 1200 - 1300 LT and after 2000 LT as well as on SUN during the sermon time BTN 0915 - 1030 LT." Almost all airports are closed for takeoffs during a specified lunch time, and in this case, no takeoffs are allowed during the pastor's Sunday sermon. Therefore, a pilot has to carefully plan every trip away from their home airport, and there is no one place to find everything. First, you check the official aeronautical publication, the VFR Manual; there you'll find the operating hours, landing permission contact, and the pattern information (non-standard patterns are the rule in Switzerland!). Then you check the airport's website, where there might be additional information that is not included in the official publications, such as special procedures for approaching the airport, entering the pattern and noise abatement procedures.



*VFR Area Chart for Bex, showing a typical non-standard pattern – partly due to terrain, and partly due to noise abatement. (credit: SkyGuide VFR Manual)*



Non-based aircraft pay landing fees that vary between \$15 and \$50 per landing, with \$25 being fairly typical. Sometimes you get a break for pattern work, but don't count on it! I flew an hour of pattern work at a neighboring airport, and the landing fees cost as much as the airplane rental! Plus, you have to park the plane, get out, and find the office to pay the fees. You'll need to fill out some paperwork, including the landing and departure time, aircraft weight, pilot, etc. If nobody is in the office to accept your credit card, then you'd better have exact change (checks aren't used in Europe). This adds a lot of time to a training flight where you plan to land at one or two other airports. Fortunately, pilots don't pay landing fees at their home airport, so that's where I flew most of my pattern work.



*Preflighting the Super Cub*



*View of the Rhine River from the LSZI pattern*

Very few GA airports in Switzerland have control towers, and even fewer have lights or IFR approaches – they are day VFR only. The Swiss regulatory agency is afraid to allow VFR and IFR traffic to mix at a non-towered airport, as is frequently the case in the US. And you might not be able to fly the IFR approach during the tower's lunch break! The lack of access in inclement weather or at night means that GA isn't really a reliable form of transportation and is mainly considered a sport or hobby. Very few European GA pilots have an instrument rating because it's a lot of work, and there's little use for it for pilots who don't fly as a career.

The Swiss government is NOT going to subsidize someone's hobby, so pilots have to pay for official weather briefings, charts, filing flight plans, etc. The cost is \$50 per year for weather briefings, NOTAMs, and 10 flight plans; the electronic VFR manual is \$55 per year, which also includes sectional and TAC charts. It can really add up. Unfortunately, the quality of the weather information is not as good as the US, and Area Forecasts are only available in German and French!

Flying in Europe is also an interesting mix of metric and imperial units. Runway lengths are in meters, but the airplane performance tables are in feet. VFR cloud clearances are in both feet and meters, such as "in controlled airspace below 10,000 *feet*, remain at least 1,000 *feet* vertically and 1,500 *meters* horizontally from clouds, with a visibility requirement of 5 *kilometers*."

010-05-00 Rules of the air

10.1 VMC Minima in Controlled airspace Class B-C-D-E

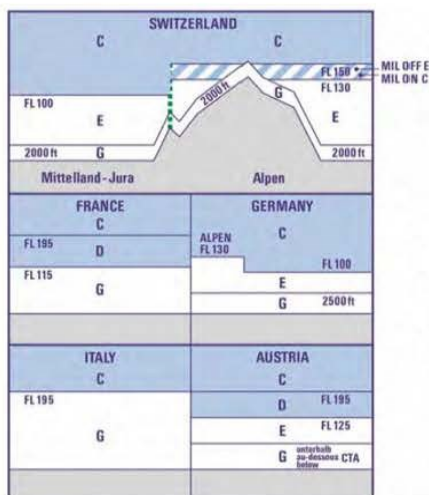


NO VFR Flights allowed in Class A Airspace

*VFR flight visibility uses feet and meters*  
(credit: King E-gle app)

However, the airspace class can change immediately when you cross a border. In Switzerland, Class G airspace only goes up to 2,000 ft, then you're in Class E, but just across the border in Italy, Class G goes up to 19,500 ft. Similarly, VFR and IFR altitudes and direction of flight are different in every country. You are responsible for looking up the regulations in each country's AIP, which you obtain from that country's aviation regulation authority. This, among other rules,

make border crossing a mess. Switzerland is not in the EU, so every border crossing requires a border-crossing flight plan and passenger manifest and is subject to customs. Each customs airport has different procedures and required notice, so you really have to call ahead, and even then, you can accidentally violate some obscure rule, or perhaps the customs officer on duty has a different interpretation from the officer you talked with on the phone.



*Airspace classification in Switzerland and neighboring countries – quite a difference!  
(credit: SkyGuide VFR Manual)*

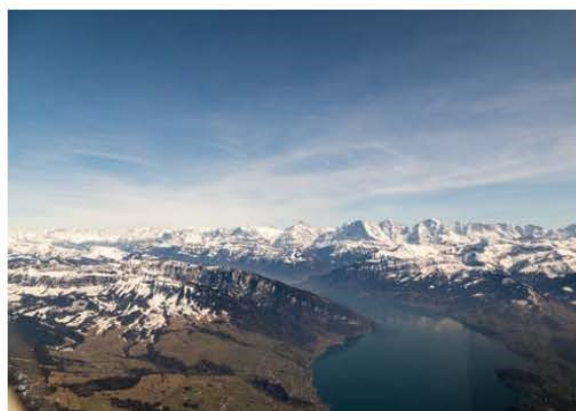
During training, I found that there were many basic rules which conflicted with how we do it in the US, and these differences sometimes created confusion between me and my flight instructor. A few examples: in Switzerland, standard pressure is set in the altimeter at 3,000 ft AGL, or a “Transition Altitude” determined by ATC. So, altitudes above 3,000 ft AGL are Flight



*Most of my conversion training was in this well-worn Piper Cadet*

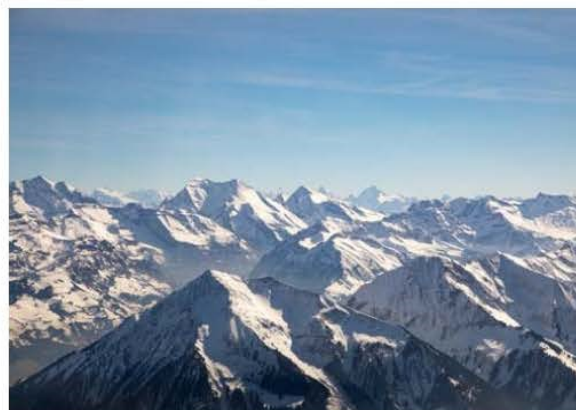
Levels. In the US, this transition is always at 18,000 ft MSL, and there is no such thing as FL65. In Switzerland, airspace above 10,000 ft (FL100) is Class C, and Class C and D airspace *require a clearance* to enter – there is no Class A or B airspace. So, in Switzerland, you must be *cleared* to fly above 10,000 ft, unless you are in the Alps, where higher altitudes apply. Supplemental oxygen is *required* above 10,000 ft. This rule is often broken, and my flight instructor was not even aware of it.

Our biggest conflict was over procedures on final approach. Europe teaches pitch for glide path, and power for airspeed; the US teaches pitch for airspeed, and power for glide path. In the end, I had to learn the European way so that my instructor and the flight examiner could correctly evaluate my performance on final approach.



*Over Thun, approaching the Alps*

The most enjoyable part of my training was the required mountain flights. Flying the Alpine mountain passes is a rite-of-passage for pilots, and it requires careful route and weather planning. Wind conditions are critical, and never fly in the Alps when the Föhn winds are blowing!



*Over Spiez, entering the Alps!*



One route through the Alps that I flew often went over Thun, Spiez, up the canyon to Gemmi Pass, over Sion (not too far from the Matterhorn, the Eiger, and Jungfrau), then up the valley to Montreaux on Lake Geneva, over Bern, and back to Schupfart. It takes about two hours in the Cadet – much of that is climbing up to 9,500 ft, which is required to clear Gemmi Pass.



*Gemmi Pass*



*Bern, the capitol of Switzerland*



*Enjoying the Alps with Kate!*

Another great flight was through Sanetsch Pass, because Gemmi Pass was clouded over. We got a great view of the Tsanfleuron Glacier, which is also a designated “Mountain Airport”, but you have to have a special Mountain License to land there. That license is not easy to get and has rigorous currency requirements.



*Gsteig –a designated Mountain Airstrip*



*Tsanfleuron Glacier – also a designated Mountain Airstrip*



As soon as I was able, I set my sights on getting a EASA tailwheel endorsement. I had no tailwheel training in the US, so this was completely new to me. I just wanted to fly that beautiful Super Cub, plus it was the cheapest airplane on the line and generally available due to the small number of flight club pilots who could fly it. It was, however, not the most comfortable airplane for my 6'4" frame. But it was worth it. My instructor was a corporate pilot for Novartis, and he regularly flew Novartis' Falcon Jet to Oakland, California. During the layovers, he would rent a Super Cub in Livermore and fly all over California. So his English was excellent, and understanding each other wasn't usually a problem (cultural differences aside). It still took almost a year, due to his availability and the fact that he didn't want to sign me off until I had a good amount of experience in all kinds of conditions – including wind and rain.



*Preheating on a cold February morning*

I can't count the number of dead-stick, simulated emergency landings I made in the Super Cub! It was a lot. After the endorsement, I still wasn't allowed to land on paved runways, due to club policy. I needed 50 landings on grass after my endorsement before I could start my "hard surface" training. This wasn't required to land on grass, and many pilots didn't bother, since our field was grass. But I wanted to be able to make a fuel stop on a paved runway, in the case of a long trip. For the hard-surface training, we flew to Birrfeld, Bressaucourt, and then the 12,800 ft long runway at Basel-Euroairport. Bressaucourt was "interesting" because everyone was speaking French on CTAF. Fortunately, my instructor understood enough French to point out traffic that I didn't see. Yikes! This was a common theme in Switzerland. There was a rule that everyone had to speak English on CTAF, but the local pilots revolted, and the rule was revoked within a few months. Even when pilots or ATC were talking

"English", it often was not easy to understand them. To be fair, they didn't always understand my American English either. I butchered the pronunciation of most French or Swiss-German towns/checkpoints that I read off the chart.



*Approach to Gruyeres, over the castle*



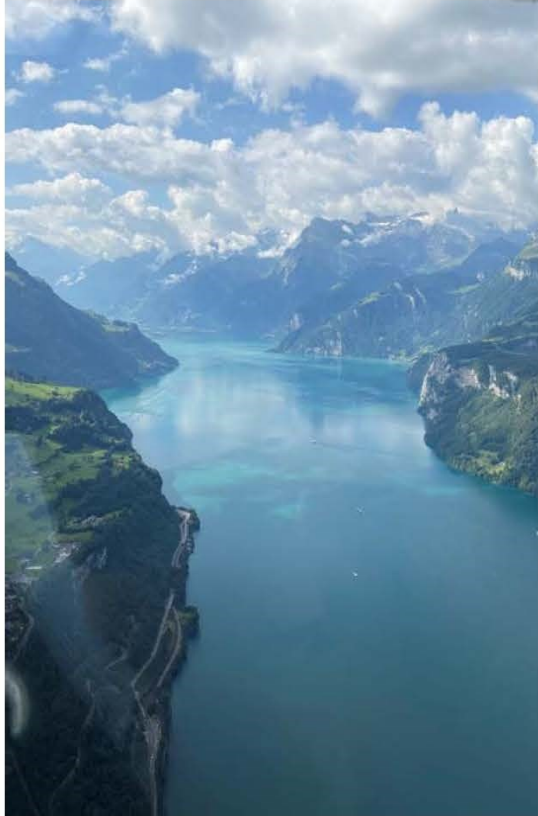
*Gruyeres Airport*



But in the end, my most memorable flights were low and slow in the Super Cub, following a route from Schupfart to Zürich, along Lake Zürich to Pfäffikon, then Brunnen on Lake Luzern, over the lake past Buochs and the Pilatus Aircraft factory, over Luzern, and back to Schupfart. I flew this tour many times, and it was also my last flight in Switzerland, flown on the day of our departure, with Michelle – and it ended in a perfect, three-point landing. 🌄



*Lake Luzern, Mount Pilatus (ahead) Mount Rigi (right)*



*Lake Luzern*



*The city of Luzern*



*Basel and surrounding area – our hometown for five years!*



*The Rhine River*

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If you have something interesting to write about we'd like to put it in the newsletter and share it with the Missoula aviation community! Long (about 500 words), short, funny, serious, whatever. The News is published intermittently. Interested in contributing? Contact the editor (see below).

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