



Big Easy Wing



Volume 9, Issue 6

June 2, 2024

Unit Leader—Harold Buchler



Happy Fourth !

Other than the constant heat, we held our Father’s Day Flight on June 15. Once again, we had members of the British Automotive Club and their vehicles. This year we had over twenty vehicles in our hangar. As you can see from the pictures, the cars were really something. It was a successful event.

As a thank you for the British Automotive Club attending and participating in our event, we raffled off a flight to the Club members. One lucky car owner, Fred Seelig, got to fly in our Stearman. In addition to that flight, we sold five more rides that day.

The Officers of the BEW decided that we will not have a general membership meeting **this July**. You will be notified when the next general membership meeting is held.

On July 5, our Stearman will be on static display at the terminal building for a “FlyCulture” event. Besides our plane, there will be Navy, Army, and Coast Guard aircraft present. A Fly-By should occur at 3 PM. On May 19, we will be hosting the EAA Allstars again. Please make every effort to come out that day. On July 20 we will be holding our second Aviation Merit Badge Day at the hangar for the Scouts of Troop 18 from Westwego.

Our Operations Officer Mike “Hansel” Scott is relocating to Memphis. As you know, Mike flies for FedEx. Since it is based in Memphis it was only logical that he purchased a home there. But fear not, Mike will still be around. He has his National Guard duties here and will be available to fly the Stearman. See you at the hangar!



Officers:

Wing Leader

Harold Buchler
hbuchler@bellsouth.net

Executive Officer

Robert Claypool
rclaypool@computercc.com

Adjutant/Development

Shirley Colomb
shirleycol@yahoo.com

Education Officer

Jim Buchler
jbuchler@outlook.com

Financial Officer

James Myrkis
jamesmyrkis@gmail.com

Maintenance Officer

Terry Clausing
clautj@cox.net

Operations Officer

Mike Scott
mmscott86@gmail.com

AOPSO

Kris Caldwell
julietkilocharlie@yahoo.com

Safety Officer

Richard Wood
hurkhunter@yahoo.com

Membership Meeting

No meeting this July



COMMEMORATIVE
AIR FORCE

Big Easy Wing
8550 Lloyd Stearman Dr.
New Orleans, LA 70126
Next to FAA tower

Contact us:
info@bigeasywing.org

On the web:
bigeasywing.org



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Operation Officer—Mike Scott



Greetings Big Easy Wing!



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AOPSO (Assistant Operations Officer), Kris Caldwell



julietkilocharlie@yahoo.com

Happy 4th Big Easy Wing,

We had a great ride day on Saturday, June 15th. The Stearman looked fantastic with the backdrop of some gorgeous classic British cars. My person favorite was the super classy 1950s black MG. We also had a great time getting to know the members of the British Car Club and, of course, they loved N'Awlins Lady. A few of them purchased rides and we gave 6 total rides, despite the heat. As we taxied by on taxiway Charlie and Echo, the passengers and pilot's appetite were whetted when we smelled the grilled hamburgers that Chef Harold was preparing.

Our professional ground crew comprised of Rick, Glenn, Karl, Bill, and Terry ensured that the airplane was ready, the passengers were properly briefed, and the startup and taxi was safe. Between flights, they kept the pilot shaded and cooled with an umbrella, battery-powered fan and plenty of water. The first flights were smooth as silk while the later flights had a little moderate turbulence. All the passengers disembarked with a wide smile!



It was a great team effort and we're looking at potential future ride days. Stay tuned!





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Educational News by Roger Jeffrey



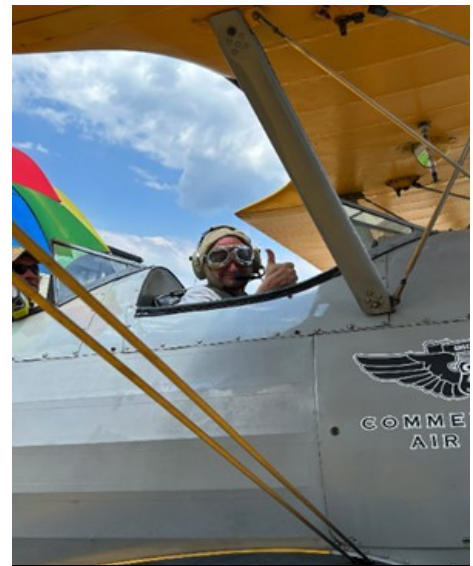
We had 23 British cars visit our hangar on Saturday June 15, 2024. The group was from the **British Motoring Club New Orleans (BMCNO)**, and they brought a great variety of British cars, (one visitor

even sneaked in his Italian Alfa Romero). Luckily, we were able to fit all the cars into the shade of our hangar, as it was quite hot that day! The group enjoyed strolling our collection of aircraft and meeting the members of our wing.

Two members of British Motoring Club New Orleans, Dan Alleger and Terry Lopez, purchased a ride in our Stearman. To show our appreciation for the club coming out, we held a raffle for a flight at \$10 per ticket. One lucky member of BMCNO won the raffle. The winner, Fred Seelig, thoroughly enjoyed his flight, along with the other members who flew that day.



Terry Lopez



Fred Seelig



Dan Alleger



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Roger's article continues



Harold Buchler kindly cooked hamburgers for lunch and everyone took a break from the heat out on our flightline patio. The visit was a tremendous success and BMCNO said they look forward to visiting again.

Upcoming educational events include a visit from the Young Eagles / Excite All Stars on July 19th and the following day, July 20th, we will hold our second Kaydet Training Course for Scout Troop 18. We have six scouts signed up and eager to take the course, which will qualify them for their Aviation Merit Badge.

See you all at the next meeting!



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Safety Officer –Rick Wood



Hello BIG EASY WING

Well, here we are again in Hurricane season. As I write this there are hurricanes in the Gulf. Systems having been starting early this year and some have already created havoc. We have seen lots of heavy rainstorms, high tides, and flooding so far. It looks like a rather active season **so be prepared.**



A few suggestions:

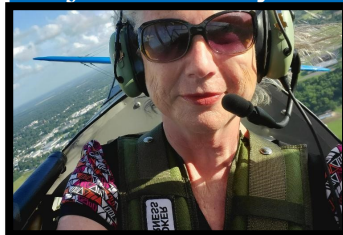
Have your action plan for leaving and know where your valuables are that need to be taken with you.

When using a generator, make sure it is placed well away from the house. Most portable generators will not be able to run your entire central AC. So most likely you will have to open windows so keep it a good distance away. And never refuel the generator while it is running. It just takes a little gas in the wrong place to be dangerous. Stop it and let it cool for 5 minutes.

When hooking the generator to the house turn off the main breaker to isolate it from the meter. Otherwise, you can back feed the electricity to the pole. And that can result in shocking the workers repairing the electricity.

Let's hope we don't get a Hurricane this year but if we do **let's be prepared.**

Adjutant-Shirley Colomb



Hi There,

I would like to welcome Jon Barrileaux to the Big Easy Wing. He is our latest member. So when you see him (someone you do not recognize) go say Hi!.

Advertisement is essential to growth. This month we are participating with "FlyCulture." They are hosting an aviation event and our Stearman will be there along with members working at our table. News media should be there. So let's hope we get some recognition. I want to thank the guys who are volunteering.

As always...

Dues may be paid *Online* by going to our BEW website [online store](#), call me or you can mail me a check.

Checks mailed to:

**CAF Big Easy Wing
c/o Shirley Colomb, Adjutant
281-413-4525**

1216 Brockenbraugh Ct Metairie, LA 70005



julietkilocharlie@yahoo.com

Distar D-13/15 SunDancer

First Impressions: It's a plane! It's a glider! It's a... MOTORGLIDER! The SunDancer is every bit as fun as its name sounds.

Design Features: Unlike Icarus, the "sun dancer" from Greek mythology, this machine is not made of feathers and wax, so there's no danger in flying too close to the sun! Part glider, part airplane, this composite T-tailed motor glider can be bought with either tricycle gear or taildragger configurations. It also comes with options for wing tips. Upward-turned winglets provide a touring option with a 42-foot 8-inch (13 meter) wingspan, while the longer wingtip extensions for soaring give it a 49-foot 2-inch (15 meter) wingspan. And yes, the D-13/15 gets its nomenclature from the wingspan in meters. The wingtips are locked in place with a long, threaded machine screw and are easily swapped, depending on the mission of the day. The shorter wingtips provide a 26:1 glide ratio, while the longer ones provide a respectable 30:1 glide ratio; not bad for a two seat motor glider! The fuselage features an aft-sliding bubble canopy and side by side seating. It comes standard with a BRS chute by Galaxy GRS. In an emergency, I'm told the BRS chute can be deployed in the landing flare when approximately 12 inches above the ground, should an extreme short field landing be required. The chute will completely stop the aircraft in only about a single plane length. The sturdy main landing gear legs are made of continuous laminate composite, and the tricycle gear model has a small roller wheel on the tail boom in case the pilot slightly over-flares.



Background: The Czech company, Distar Air, has been building the D-13/15 since it took over the UFM-13 Lambada design from Urban Air in 2016. The Lambada was certified as a *microlight* aircraft (<1,042 lbs. with ballistic parachute installed) under *Federation Aeronautique Internationale* (FAI), whereas the SunDancer weighs in heavier at 1,320 pounds and is certified in the U.S. as a Light Sport Aircraft (LSA) in the glider category by the FAA.

Powerplant: The powerplant is 100 horsepower Rotax 912 ULS coupled to a WOODCOMP propeller. The propeller is full-feathering for when the engine is secured in flight and the SunDancer transforms into a regular glider. The feathering is accomplished mechanically via cables with a lever on the floorboard just forward of the seats. Two wing tanks hold 26 gallons, making it possible to cruise for about 6 hours on engine power. Of course, with good lift available the hours aloft can be significantly extended once the Rotax is secured and the propeller is feathered!

Plane Impressions continues

Ergonomics: The SunDancer has a convenient indented step molded into the side of the fuselage. This makes stepping in possible without a stepladder. On the SunDancer taildragger model, climbing in is even easier because the pilot or passenger can conveniently step on the landing gear leg to get aboard. Once settled into the seat, grab the center of the bubble canopy behind you and pull it straight forward until fully closed. There are two canopy locks on either side and one canopy latch between and behind both occupants. Once the canopy is closed, it is apparent there isn't much extra shoulder room. There are two window vents/scoops that provide plenty of airflow in the cockpit and an optional overhead sunshade providing some relief on those hot summer soaring days! Headroom is limited, which can be a factor for those over six feet tall.

Preflight/Startup: Cockpit checks are accomplished first and require the speed brakes to be extended, propeller feathering control to be checked and seats properly locked in place. As with any glider, careful attention must be made to the wing spar locking mechanisms and flight control connections. In the D-13/15 these are easily inspected by looking immediately behind the seats. On the exterior inspection check the single spar bolt on top of the horizontal stabilizer, verify the integrity of the spoiler fences on top of the wings, and check all three static ports for to ensure the airspeed and variometer function properly.



The Rotax is burped, oil and coolant checked and fuel is drained at two sump points. Once you are settled into the cockpit, you will note the circuit breakers are a spring pushbutton-style and function as on/off switches. The required breakers are pushed in, the ignition switches are turned on, the choke is set, propeller is confirmed in fine pitch with the vernier throttle fully out, and the starter key is turned. The Rotax will rev and start without hesitation. Open the choke and

check oil pressure on the MGL avionics EFIS. While everything is warming up, check spoiler and flaperon operation, and configure the EFIS for your mission. Taxi, in the tricycle gear configuration, is easy and the direct-linkage nose gear provides plenty of authority to make a very tight radius turn. Brakes are hydraulically actuated via a handbrake grip on the stick. After runup, conduct pre-takeoff checks and double check that all three canopy latches are secured.

Takeoff/Flight Characteristics: After lineup, take one last look at all engine instruments and add power until the throttle is wide open, providing approximately 5,500 rpm, which is then delivered to the propeller via the gear reduction drive. Use small rudder inputs to avoid over-controlling the direct linkage nose gear. Unless you are familiar with flying other motorgliders or perhaps the U-2 Dragonlady, the short takeoff roll and the climb rate will surprise you! With its long wings you can see upwards of 1,400 fpm, which may not seem so bizarre until you realize your airspeed is only 60 KIAS!

Cruise: The SunDancer will cruise at about 95 KIAS while only burning between 3.5 to 4 gallons per hour, making it a respectable cross country cruising machine when in "powered mode". When you are ready for some soaring, pull the throttle back to idle and power-off all electrical equipment.

Plane Impressions continues

Then simply flip both magneto switches off and the Rotax will immediately stop. The SunDancer is not fazed by the sudden lack of power; there is no pitching down and no need to trim. Just reach down and pull the prop lever full aft to feather and enjoy the relative silence. Turn on the variometer and whatever other electrical you would like. Depending on the conditions of the day and your soaring skills, find some lift and enjoy a few minutes or hours of engine-off fun!

Landing: There is certainly nothing wrong landing with the engine off in “glider mode,” but many pilots prefer to have the engine operating to provide landing pattern or go-around options. Before restating the engine, power off all electrical equipment and flip up both mag switches to the “on” position. The propeller must be unfeathered prior to starting and actually has a sensor that will prevent the starter from engaging if it is still feathered. If the engine is cold-soaked from soaring with the engine off, you’ll need to turn the choke on, push the starter and let the engine idle a bit to get the engine and oil temperatures up. Once the engine and alternator are back, online you can turn back on all your electrical equipment. Once back in the pattern use pitch attitude to hold the airspeed at 60 knots and the spoilers to manage your glidepath. As with any glider, it can be easy to float down the entire runway without landing if airspeed and glidepath are not managed correctly. The flare and touchdown are as expected for both taildragger and nose wheel models. A good technique to prevent over-controlling the tricycle-gear model is to keep the stick aft, thereby minimizing potential PIO from the direct-connection nosewheel steering. The visibility is good in the taildragger model and the landing attitude is fairly level so there are no issues with a three-point landing under most conditions.

Wrap-up: A motorglider provides the best of two worlds and, as such, is a series of compromises. The SunDancer handles these compromises in as seamless a way as possible. In the “airplane” configuration, the SunDancer flies and acts like an airplane, but when the engine is secured and the prop feathered, it transforms into a very capable glider, providing hours of thermaling, riding mountain waves, or cross country soaring!



Tricycle and Tailwheel SunDancers

On the web:

bigeasywing.org



Contact us:

info@bigeasywing.org