

PIPERS

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE PIPER OWNER SOCIETY



MAGAZINE

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SuperCub.Org's East Tennessee Fly-In

Fun and Fellowship in the Hills

Electrical Failure

Creative Flying during an Emergency Situation

Meridian

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The Meridian Turns 10

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On the front cover: By any measure, the Piper Meridian is an endearing machine for executives who need corporate transport over short-to-moderate distances. *Jim Lawrence*

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Left: Flying across the gorgeous Tennessee hills in the fall.
Chris Nesin

"Super" Fly-In for SuperCub.Org

Pilots in East Tennessee

By Donna Jones



The official banner that welcomed everyone to the fly-in. *Donna Jones*

Blue skies and fall colors filled the Tennessee hills with a picturesque view for nearly 100 aviation enthusiasts who came to visit Northeast Tennessee for the fifth annual East Tennessee Super Cub Fly-In held October 7-9, 2011. Actually, the festivities got an early start on Thursday, October 6, when many anxious pilots arrived to get the fly-in started ahead of schedule.

Steve Lewis, host and organizer of the event, was surprised to have 42 airplanes arrive on Thursday. Steve is a Piper Super Cub owner and a long-time member of SuperCub.Org, a well-known organization of Super Cub

pilots and other aviation operators. The East Tennessee Fly-In was held at the Elizabethton Municipal Airport (0A9), where Steve's "day job" is based. He is an EMS helicopter pilot with Wings Air Rescue and has nearly 17,000 hours flying time under his belt.

Steve said, "Based on the previous years, there are normally 10 or so aircraft coming in on Thursday. The turnout was just tremendous this year. Last year, we had 52 airplanes total. We have never had this much activity before the fly-in started."

Steve was not concerned, though, as the Elizabethton airport staff and many friends (new and old) pitched in

to accommodate the SuperCub.Org pilots. I had offered to help out and became a welcome addition to this group when I fed them on Thursday night. Some had been travelling for several days and really appreciated home-cooked meals and southern hospitality. It was definitely an interesting weekend with a unique group of people.

The majority of the group camped in tents by their airplanes throughout the weekend. They gathered for meals in the lunchroom at the airport FBO or under the pavilion for fellowship, pilot briefings of the upcoming events, and schedule information. The pavilion picnic area was complete with electricity, a popcorn machine, and hot chocolate. The bonfire pit was a nighttime gathering spot for the group with plenty of room for chairs and blankets. In stereotypical Tennessee tradition, Steve provided an outdoor refrigerator, covered by a tent, for their convenience. Next to the refrigerator was a nice stack of wood to keep the bonfire going. Showers in the FBO were also available. What more could you ask for a weekend outing? These pilots were able to "rough it" in enjoyment while they gathered with new and old friends for a few days of flying and relaxation.



There's no finer way to go camping! *Shari Massengill* Inset Photo: Steve Lewis brought all of the important comforts of home outdoors. *Donna Jones*



Aerial view of Hales Landing Airport. *John Graham*

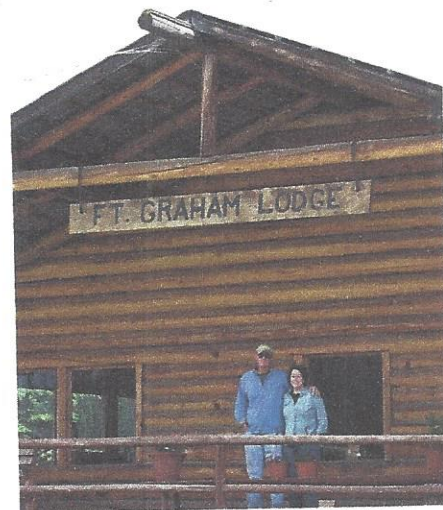
Steve told me, "This group is family. They are an incredible bunch of people. I think many of the early arrivals were attributed to a rainy fly-in scheduled the previous weekend in Ohio. Many of those airplanes were already traveling for the Ohio Bush Planes Fly-In at John Graham's place in Adams Mills, Ohio. Graham Field is located about 50 miles east of Columbus. The change in the weather put a damper on the turnout there. They were ready for blue skies and fall colors after a rainy weekend. Those airplanes just got a jump to beautiful Tennessee and couldn't wait to get here."

On the way to Tennessee, several pilots met in West Virginia at Hale's Landing Airport near Elizabeth to explore the

area for a day or two before heading on. There ended up being a convoy of 10 airplanes in the group by the time they landed at OA9.

Steve said, "You couldn't have asked for more perfect weather in Tennessee for a fly-in. The fall colors were almost at peak. This provided a great scene for pilots coming in and going home, as well as added an extra bonus for breathtaking views during our fly-outs."

The famous Graham Farm Airport, popularly called Graham Field, is well-known among Super Cub pilots (or any other pilots, so I am told). John and Deb Graham welcome drop-ins to their place all year long. They have a heated building known as the Scale House that has a loft, bathroom, and shower for stranded



John and Deb Graham enjoy a moment together on the porch of Ft. Graham Lodge. *John Graham*

pilots. The annual fly-in at their place is scheduled the weekend before or after the East Tennessee Fly-In so that many people can make it to both events. Graham Field has turned into a good stopping point for the northern and southern pilots to gather at a central location any time of the year. John and Deb welcome the traffic and provide a second home to travelers. Even though I have not been to Graham Field yet, I feel as though I know the area. Many videos are filmed at Graham Field and the surrounding Ohio countryside. I have seen a few of the Graham specials, as well as some from the uncannily creative videographer Greg Swingle. Check Vimeo for entertaining videos from both producers.

Pilots flew in from all over the United States to be a part of this spectacular Tennessee event. I met people from



The group had a little fun posing with this ominous sign. *John Graham*

Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Michigan, New York, New Hampshire, Texas, Ohio, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, North Carolina, Virginia, and other parts of Tennessee. I'm sure other states were represented. With as many people already at the fly-in and the additions that showed up throughout the weekend, it was difficult to meet everyone. I promised not to divulge the nicknames I had to make up to remember some of the people I met. There were around 80 aircraft that landed for the event with nearly 100 attendees. Pretty good bunch for a "small" fly-in. Steve had better prepare for a much larger crowd next year after the success of this year's event.

There was a tentative fly-out schedule for the pilots in attendance. The Friday schedule included a 50-mile trip from Elizabethton to Sam Kite's grass strip a few miles west of Jonesborough, Tennessee, and back. After lunch, the group then parted their ways and ventured out over the Tennessee hills on their own before heading back to their Elizabethton base. After dinner, the group enjoyed bonfire entertainment from a local bluegrass band, the Cork Lickers, before calling it a night.

Their Saturday schedule included a 200-mile flying trip. They travelled through the Nolichucky River gorge into North Carolina. With a departure

from Shiflett Field, they took a scenic flight over Grandfather Mountain, venturing back through Damascus, Virginia, to stop at Catron Field in Chilhowie, Virginia, for lunch before heading back. Many pilots again explored the surrounding country on their own as they made their way back to their temporary home base.

Bob Breeden and son, Bobby, (the "Breeden Boys," as they are now dubbed) came back from the Saturday fly-out all smiles. They were laughing as they rolled out of their orange Super Cub. I asked them where they had been, since I noticed they had mud caked on the bottom of the wings above the tires. It was 80-plus degrees with beautiful dry weather, so I knew they had been on their own adventure and found a new route back to OA9. Bob told me they had landed on a mountain top at 4,550 feet, which made for a really good landing zone with a 50-mile view filled with spectacular fall colors. Bobby volunteered that he had the most fun landing uphill in some steep mountainside fields, swooping in uphill and then spinning around 180 degrees and roaring out downhill. They both were excited to tell me about a low mud island in a lake they had found, which explains the muddy wings. They were impressed with the super-sticky mud. With all of the

beautiful fall colors, leave it up to the Breeden Boys to find an East Tennessee mud hole to play in.

Spirits were high that night, and, after dinner, the group was entertained by Pat Gagan and Jacob Young, Roan Mountain State Park rangers. They enlightened the group with storytelling detail of the history of East Tennessee back to 1750 and the early settlers who lived there. Ranger Young was dressed in 1750s clothing and gave a flintlock rifle demonstration for the crowd. Following the educational and historic storytelling, Donald Jacks, known as "The Donald" by his Super Cub friends, added a comedy twist to the night with stories and jokes for the crowd. This year, he added a few more "you might be a redneck" additions from his Tennessee adventures.

Sunday had the group up early with breakfast and goodbyes as they headed back to their home states. By noon, everyone was gone with smiles on their faces and memories of a fun and exciting event. Other than flattened grass from campsites, people walking, aircraft, and vehicles, you could not tell there had been so many airplanes gathered in one place.

The East Tennessee Fly-In and Ohio Bush Planes Fly-In are just a couple of the annual fly-in events attended by the SuperCub.Org members. Different members of the group host numerous



Part of Saturday's schedule included a lunch stop at Catron Field. *John Graham*



Piper pride on full display. *Chris Nesin*

events throughout the year at their home airports and private landing strips all over the United States. These range from a fly-in pancake breakfast to a hanger gathering for the day to a weekend fly-out tour like the one in Tennessee. One of the longest-running events is a week-long fly-in during the EAA AirVenture week at New Holstein, Wisconsin. This event has a huge turnout and has been going on for 10 years.

This is a unique family of pilots who like to get together as often as they can. From what I have been able to deter-

mine, a fly-in starts as an idea to gather Super Cub friends somewhere. Someone comes up with a place they would like to meet. Those planning to participate help organize it, give everyone a place to land and camp, and make it happen by getting out the word. The "fly in" part comes together on its own when everyone shows up with tents and travel gear. Food, friends, and fellowship get included. If the event is successful with a good turnout, they add it to the SuperCub.Org fly-in and gatherings calendar for the next year and make it an annual event.

Many of the Super Cub pilots also meet at different locations to fly to some of the trade shows together or gather afterwards at a specific location. For example, the Alaska State Aviation Trade Show and Conference in Anchorage, Alaska, is the weekend before the Valdez, Alaska, competition. Many pilots will catch up at the show and continue as a group to Valdez. Others will join the group along the way and make it another Super Cub gathering. They watch, compete, and support their friends at the Valdez competition before returning back home.

This group can get together with a simple invitation. It seems when they left East Tennessee on Sunday morning, 10 or so airplanes ended up at Graham Field in Ohio. They enjoyed lunch and hung out with their "family" before making their way back home.

SuperCub.Org is not only a founded organization with members but, technically, a website of communication for Super Cub owners, various aircraft owners, and other interested aviation parties. Steve Johnson,

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founder of SuperCub.Org, told me, "I started the site because I could find little or nothing about Super Cubs on the internet at the time when I had just purchased one. As you have probably figured out, it has grown in the last 11 years to be about a lot more than just Super Cubs."

Regarding the SuperCub.Org membership, Steve Johnson advised, "At present, we have almost 7,500 people signed up for our discussion forums, of which around 1,700 are donating members. This site is run much like public television where the content is largely free and people send money to help support it. We have more than 100,000 visitors to the site each month, and, on average, we get around 10 new registrations per week. About 85 percent of our traffic is from the United States, but we have a very active international group. Interestingly, 21 percent of the United States traffic is from Alaska. Alaska is the largest state in membership. The biggest fundraiser is our annual calendar sales. We print more than 3,000 calendars using pictures that folks from all over the world have submitted. To get a calendar, you make a donation to the site at a certain level. If there are any left (very rare), we will put the last ones on sale in our on-line store."

Check out the SuperCub.Org website, and join to become part of this great aviation group. You will enjoy being a part of this family and attending the events they host throughout the year. The communication on the site is informative, and the forums and news sections are interesting and well worth reading. They post some fantastic stories, complete with pictures and videos, that are enjoyable to read and view.



The Breedens took an alternate, adventure-filled course back to home base. **Inset Photo:** The Breedens Boys are Bobby, on the left, and his father, Bob, on the right. *John Graham*

From my conversations at the fly-in and the comments on the SuperCub.Org site, the group indicated that they will definitely be back next year. Everyone enjoyed the beautiful fly-out trips through the mountains, the good fellowship among their friends (new and old), the food, and all-around southern hospitality. Steve Lewis is already making plans for next year's event.

I was pleased to have been able to meet this diverse group. Even though I knew a few of the pilots from my work with them in the Cessna field, those I didn't know included me like I had always been part of their aviation family. These guys let me know they appreciated my help at the fly-in. I enjoyed cooking for them, as well as hanging out with them. I look forward to seeing them again in the future.

Happy flying! ✈️



Steve Johnson is the founder of SuperCub.Org. He and his passengers were all smiles on this flight. *Steve Johnson*

About the author and Davis

Aviation: Donna Jones has worked in aviation for 19 years. She began in aviation with Bonaire Aviation Company and stayed with Davis Aviation when it bought the Bonaire 550 product line in 1998. She helped establish 30-plus STCs for the single-engine Cessna line and assisted in numerous field approvals and deviations when an STC was not available for a particular installation. Davis Aviation continues with worldwide distribution of the Bonaire 550 engine and propeller upgrade, propeller-only installations, and engine mount modifications. Davis Aviation offers a variety of STC options for Cessna aircraft, as well as a few upgrades for Piper airplanes. Davis Aviation can be reached at (423) 652-1113. Website address is www.davisaviationservices.net.

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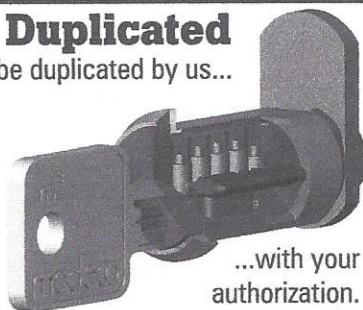
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