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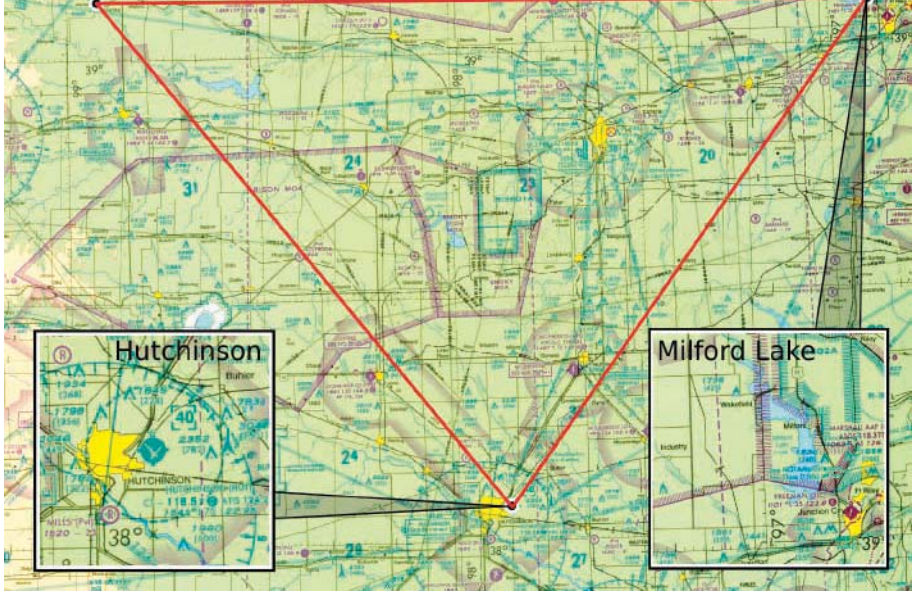
By Wanda Zuege

Racers

The participants of the Hutchinson-300 air race gathered together at Hutchinson Airport. John Thompson (second from left) and Wanda Zuege (third woman from left in first row), placed ninth out of fourteen teams.

a standpipe to make the second turn of the race and just saw a "silo." The team kept going, but it turned out the silo was the standpipe, so the racers had to turn around and lost some time.



The Hutchinson-300 air race route. *Flyagogo.net image.*

to the South Dam on Millford Lake. John made the announcements ten miles out, five miles out and one mile out. At 1,000 feet AGL and past the east end of the dam, we turned left on course to the second landmark. This time we were determined to keep on course and make up for the time we lost on the first leg.

Our heads were in the game now. Winds aloft were out of the southwest at 32 knots, so I kept us in the surface winds, which were also out of the southwest but only at 10 knots. John was keeping track of all the landmarks and dictating new heading changes by degrees when needed. Our tracking was straight and our time was as good as we could get.

Second leg: Millford Lake Dam to Standpipe at Paradise

- True course—265 degrees
- Fly at 1,000 feet MSL
- Surface winds—210 at 10 knots, winds aloft—220 at 32 knots
- Estimated ground speed—103 knots (1.72 nm/minute)
- Magnetic heading for surface winds—260 degrees

The other racers were starting to loosen up on the radio chat line. Questions about the landmark up ahead resulted in answers like, "Why don't you land and find out for sure and let us know. In fact, just wait for us there. We'll be right behind you." Or "You sound tired. Why don't you stop at Paradise and get some rest." It provided comic relief to what was turning out to be a very hot and hectic day in the cockpit.

Other planes were passing us by. "Racer Two, Racer 54 on your left." As I looked to the left, the "Mighty Mooney" was also taking advantage of the surface winds. Assurance for us we were on course and a reminder that we were at the end of the line of racer planes. Racer 54 was the second-to-last plane to start the race.

The cockpit was heating up from the Kansas heat. We were sweating profusely. No longer cold, our bandanas were limp against our necks. The frozen water bottles were retrieved from the back and still frozen except for a cupful of the cold, melted, thirst-quenching liquid, which we downed right away. The bottles themselves were

John (left) and Wanda prior to taking off for the Hutchinson-300 in their Piper Cherokee.

- Fly full length of Runway 13 no lower than 1,750 feet MSL (200 feet AGL).
- Time line is at the intersection of Runway 13/31 and Runway 17/35.

Our timing-flyby completed, we climbed to pattern altitude as the tower cleared us to land on Runway 13. Alone in the pattern after flying at full throttle for almost three hours, a wide pattern was flown to bring the RPM back down slowly. The sensation of flying at fast cruise at low altitudes and then slowing down for the approach with a density altitude of 5,000 feet, gave us new aerodynamic sensations. In this heat, we were prepared for a higher true airspeed approach followed by a longer rollout during the flare, as mentioned by Scott Gardner, FAA safety program manager.

Effect of Density Altitude on Landing Speed

The June 2006 issue of *Mentor,* the monthly publication of the National Association of Flight Instructors safety program manager at the Seattle FSDO (http://www.nafinet.org/publications/index.html):

"Fly the same indicated airspeed you would use at sea level, but remember that 75 mph indicated is 90 mph true in high-density altitude conditions, so your groundspeed is going to be 15 mph faster than at sea level … and the distance covered during the flare at altitude is considerably more than what you're used to at sea level."

Exhilarated, exhausted, humbled and hungry, we tied down the plane, requested fuel-to-tabs and shuffled into the terminal to hitch a ride back to the hotel for a shower and dry clothes. The awards would be announced at 3 p.m.

We had a chance to meet Mathew and Pam Giltner, Race Team 54, the Mighty Moonie drivers, as they gave us a ride to the hotel. Hardcore racers, Mathew and Pam were patient with all of our race questions and disappointments about our performance. We soon found out that they, too, had a difficult time finding landmarks. Matt's quote for the year, as printed in the *2006 Air Race Program*, says it all, "This will be my tenth year of air rac

The awards for the 300 air race using only pilotage skills took place at the Hutchinson Airport. Dennis and Jeanette Hackler won first place with a score of 3.57 knots over their handicap speed of 137.65 knots in a 180-hp Piper Arrow. Jeanette has flown eight Air Race Classic races. The Air Race Classic is the only all-woman, transcontinental air race flying race routes approximately 2,400 statute miles in length. As a husband-and-wife team, the Hacklers have participated in six U. S. Air Races.

With 14 planes in the race, our Cherokee Chariot placed ninth coming in 3.23 knots under the handicap. Not bad since we thought we were last. It's probably the only time we can say we beat a Swearingen SX300 in an air race! The next day we flew the Marion Jayne 1,800-mile air race. We were sooooo ready for it.

"Race, race, race your plane swiftly through the skies.

Navigate, navigate, navigate, navigate. Win yourself a prize!"

(This is the U.S. Air Race theme song—it has the same tune as "Row, Row, Row Your Boat.")

Note: In the article "Racer 2 Inbound," Nov. 2006, we noticed a mistake. On page 52, 123 RPM should be 2,350 RPM. PIPERS

Wanda Zuege, ATP, CFII, and John Thompson, CFII, provide IFR training, including the FAA Knowledge Test in 14 days. They have more than 1,000 hours each teaching accelerated two-day ground schools for the private pilot and instrument ratings. See www.amihigh-aviation.com for details.