



The Landing Field



NEWSLETTER of the Friends of Jenny educational organization

Issue 003, Winter 2016



From the Cockpit by Steve Guenard, Jenny Aviator

The view from the cockpit metaphorically suggests 'the best view in the house', and this regular feature plans to support that notion.

I have been privileged for the past two years to be associated with the "Friends of Jenny" organization to produce and fly a 1917 Curtiss JN-4 "Jenny". The quest to restore/reproduce the "Jenny" was inspired by our groups desire to preserve an iconic piece of our aviation history and to

educate the current generation on the Jenny's role as the first mass produced military trainer in the United States during WWI and her subsequent contributions as the first air mail aircraft and the preferred choice of our early barnstorming pilots. My interest in the Jenny has been longstanding and stems from the career of my great uncle Frank Byerley who, as an officer in the U.S. Army Signal Corps, learned to fly in the Jenny in 1918. My dream to one day fly a Jenny has been realized through my friendship with Dorian Walker and the entire FOJ family.

An essential part of the mission of "Friends of Jenny" is to fly the airplane wherever possible to display it to the public at air shows and other aviation events in pursuit of our educational goals. To this end we accepted an invitation and planned a cross country flight from our home base in Bowling Green, Kentucky to Columbia, Missouri for the 2016 "Salute to Veterans" air show. Dorian and I would share the piloting duties on this "Mid-America aviation adventure". And now, the "cross country".

Our plan was to depart Bowling Green on Thursday, May 26th, to be in place at Columbia's airport for the Memorial Day weekend. Our ongoing perusing of the long range weather forecast convinced us that an earlier departure would be prudent. Therefore I arrived in Bowling Green on Monday the 23rd in anticipation of an early morning departure on Tuesday. After a typical air mail pilot's short night's sleep Dorian and I departed his house for the airport shortly after 5:00 AM, greeting the sunrise as we arrived at Jenny's hangar. We sipped the last of our coffee as we preflighted Miss Jenny, then rolled her out into the beautiful dawn. We made the mandatory last minute pit stop then clambered into the cockpits and strapped in. With a touch of the start switch the Jenny's V-8 sprang instantly to life then settled into the low rumble at the power setting needed for taxi. With no other aircraft moving at this early hour the taxi was short and we rolled onto the runway for take-off.





The V-8 roared as full throttle was applied and Jenny surged forward with surprising alacrity. We leapt skyward at 6:00 AM, climbing steadily into the smooth morning air and turning on course toward our first fuel stop at Sturgis, Kentucky.

The first leg of a Jenny cross country, embarked upon in the early morning, into still air and in the beautiful light of a clear dawn never fails to instill a sense of kinship with the Jenny pilots of a hundred years ago. This morning is no exception and Dorian and I find ourselves immersed in that sensation as we fly silently over the green countryside, confident that Jenny will transport us safely to our destination. While Jenny is a demanding mistress, in this perfectly calm air she seems content to fly a fairly straight line, teasing us with the thought that maybe she harbors some affection for us after all. After an hour and twenty



minutes in ideal conditions we find ourselves on final approach into Sturgis. The landing is smooth and we turn off the runway and onto the ramp, parking by the fuel pump. The first leg complete we enjoy a few minutes of quiet and calm.

There are only a couple of people at the airport and they wander over to admire Jenny and ask a few questions. We chat as we top off the fuel tank, then thank them for their interest and settle back into the cockpits for the next leg of our journey which will take us to Carbondale, Illinois. The weather remains excellent with clear skies and light winds.

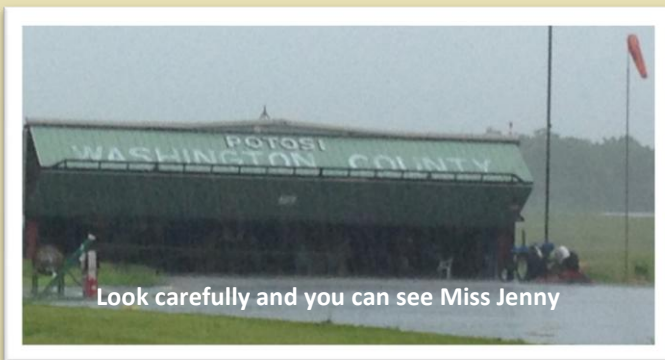
We select our stops based on two primary criteria. First, we are limited in range to no more than 110 statute miles and secondly, we try to select airports that have a runway aligned with the forecast surface wind. Miss Jenny does not like a crosswind! The leg to Carbondale's Southern Illinois airport is 73 miles and takes almost exactly one hour in smooth air. This airport has a control tower so Dorian uses a bit of technology not available to the original Jenny pilots and contacts the tower on the installed communications radio. The reaction of the controller can be quite comical/quizzical when he/she initially hears the call sign "Curtiss Jenny" but this controller takes it in stride and issues our instructions and landing clearance without a hitch. We land and taxi to the ramp at this fairly large airport as several people walk toward the fuel station to greet us. It is a given when arriving at any airport in a Jenny that everyone at the airport will want to see the airplane and talk to the pilots. Again we chat as we refuel, then go inside to pay the bill and use the "facilities" in the very nice FBO lounge. We enjoy the stop but do not stay long as we must take advantage of the good weather to make meaningful progress in our 70 mph chariot.



Our next planned leg will take us the 81 miles to Potosi, Missouri. As we depart and turn on course the tower controller wishes us well, invoking fair winds and bright skies. We thank him and climb to our cruise altitude of 1500' AGL, then settle into the routine, if it can be called that, of flying Jenny and enjoying the view of the full spring green of mid-America. One hour and five minutes sees us on final to Potosi's runway with a satisfying landing and short taxi to the fuel pump. Airport manager Patrick greets us and helps with the refueling as we fill him in on the airplane and what we are up to this week.



As always we take the opportunity to check the weather ahead for our next planned leg, this time to Rolla, Missouri. For the first time today we do not like what we see. The weather to the west has become unstable with building thunderstorms. Rolla is experiencing heavy rain and high winds. To make matters worse the weather is moving in our direction. Had we been carrying a large sack of mail perhaps we would have taken off and tried to pick our way around and through the darkening skies. Today, however, we decide that discretion is the better part of valor and the wise course is to wait for the conditions to improve. Patrick generously offers to put Jenny in his hangar, which he does after making



Look carefully and you can see Miss Jenny

room by parking his tractor outside. It is now about 12:30 and Patrick's hospitality continues as he gives us the keys to the "airport car" and recommends a cafe in Potosi. We explore the town, which doesn't take long, and then sit down to a nice lunch at the "Bearfoot Cafe". As we arrive back at the airport the rain begins. To our dismay it rains for four hours. We try to entertain ourselves, alternating between reading, talking on the phone, and napping. Such is the life of the modern day Jenny pilot. Decision time comes at

6:00 PM. The weather now looks passable and completely clear at our final destination. The winds at Rolla are still beyond our limits though. The leg to Rolla is short, about 53 miles, followed by the final leg to Columbia, another 57 miles. We decide to bypass Rolla and fly the 110 miles directly to Columbia.

We pull Jenny from the hangar and climb aboard. With about an hour and fifty minutes of daylight remaining we are eager to get airborne. We taxi to the north end of the runway and line up for our take off to the south. Again the V-8 roars at full throttle and Jenny takes to the sky. Almost immediately a strong gust grabs her and rolls her into a left bank. Dorian wrestles with her and manages to level the wings as we struggle for altitude. At 500' the air smooths and we turn toward Columbia. We climb to 2500' and level off to find the GPS showing a ground speed of 105 mph. This translates to a tailwind on the order of 30 mph, unprecedented in our Jenny experience. How to make a Jenny pilot ecstatic? Give him a ground speed in excess of 100mph. Now for the icing on this cake. Shortly after leveling off we found ourselves on top of a thin, wispy cloud deck. With the lowering sun casting its rays upon us and the cloud deck below we were enveloped in one





To the far left is a picture that Steve's great Uncle took in 1918, on the right is Steve's view taken nearly 100 years later.

of the most beautiful settings a pilot can experience. We enjoyed this incredible feast for several minutes and then flew into clear skies, continuing our sojourn over the forests, rivers and small towns of Missouri. Our tail wind held and we were approaching Columbia an hour and fifteen minutes after departing Potosi. Upon contacting the tower we received clearance to land and kissed the runway five minutes later. As we taxied to our designated hangar we embraced the feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction that comes with a mission completed, and were humbled by the thought that we were likely the only pilots on the planet to have logged Jenny time on this day. What a day it had been. The only thing that might have made us feel closer to the Jenny pilots of old would have been if we had carried that big sack of mail.

Upon shutting down the V-8 for the final time that day we were warmly greeted by Mary McCleary Posner, "Salute to Veterans" organizer, whose connection to the Jenny is very personal. As a young man her father flew Jennys when they were new and piloted a Jenny to a world altitude record. His story, her story and the story of "Salute to Veterans" are stories we'll save for another day.

All in all, a good day. Make that a great day. Thank you, Jenny.



The Canadian Army Parachute Team *The Skyhawks* push the Jenny into the Columbia hanger

Note about the author Steve Guenard. A pilot's pilot, Steve grew up in an aviation family, both his father and uncle were WW2 Navy Fighter pilots and his great Uncle, an aviation legend. After WW2 his family started a crop dusting service in Louisiana where Steve learned to fly. An appointment to the Air Force Academy allowed Steve to earn his military wings, flying both the F-106 and F-4 Fighter aircraft. A career as Captain for Delta Air Lines fueled his passion for both large commercial airplanes allowing him to spend time working on his own, including a Stearman, Piper Cub and T-6. Steve and his wife reside in Park City, Utah while his family aviation legacy is carried on by one of his sons, currently a pilot with Delta.



Family Stories

This section of our Newsletter focuses on real life stories, gathered and submitted by people who have had or known someone who has had a past experience with the Jenny.

"Our family's first aeroplane was a Jenny..."

by David J. Moore

My grandfather's brother Uncle Lester was friends with Wilbur and Orville Wright. They inspired him to get into flying and his first purchase was the Jenny pictured here in 1922. He crashed the Jenny taking people for rides at the county fair (Ohio) sometime in the 30's. He then purchased a 1939 J3 Cub, one of the earliest J3 models. It had a 50 h.p. engine.

When we entered WWII, the U. S. Army Air Corp came on his field in January of 1942, inspected the airplane and said, "We can haul it out of here, or we can fly it out of here, but

the Army Air Corp needs your airplane to train pilots!" They

negotiated terms and flew it out. After the war on October 10, 1946 Uncle Lester bought a brand new Piper J3 Cub. It was in the family for 40 years until 1986. It had been owned by two different owners from '86 until 2014. At that time, I found it for sale in southern CA and purchased it back. I flew it back to TN in August 2015. It now resides at the Smyrna airport in my hangar.



David J. Moore, Nashville, Tn., co-founder of Victory CEMP Funds is a life-long pilot as well as friend and supporter of the Friends of Jenny.



Did you know?

October 3, 2016 Jenny Birthday Party at Wright Field.

Normally, this column is reserved for "ancient history", but having just completed successfully our third flying season, we couldn't help but share this story. While attending this years "Dawn Patrol Rendezvous 2016" at the National Museum of the United States Air Force, we celebrated the 3rd birthday of Jenny #38262's first flight with a large...



birthday cake. Yes, three years ago on a cool October morning, 2013, a group of Jenny mechanics,

friends, and supporters lined up next to the grass median at the Thompkinsville, Kentucky airport to see if the 5,732 hours it took to reconstruct #38262 would 'take flight'. And yes, she did. See the first flight on our web site www.friendsofjenny.org It was an honor to be part of the great festivities hosted by the NMUSAF during their three day event. If



you haven't been there, put it on your bucket list. Check out the video NMUSAF made of our visit. https://youtu.be/DfOa_XpGDIY



Maintenance Hanger

The Jenny is basically an all wood framed aeroplane with a V8 engine held to its frame with 8 strong bolts. If you imagine that the technology of 100 years ago allowed for any 'dampening' of the vibration caused by the engine operating on a wooden



frame, think again. Most of the Jenny is covered in fabric, except for the area around that strong engine, that is covered with side, top, and bottom cowls made with aluminum. Three seasons of vibrations have caused the side cowls to show a reasonable amount of wear and tear. So this year, Master Aviation Mechanic Jon Foote, made two new side cowls, complete with hand cut and molded louvers. Since the cowls are attached to the wood frame with screws, we found that taking them off and on over the course of the many inspections that we perform caused additional wear and tear on the wood that the cowls are fastened to. So Myron and Gary came up with a solution! Steve fashioned a 1" wide piece of metal that would follow the outline of the wood engine frame. The pattern of the cowl screws was scribed and drilled on the metal. Nut plates were attached, then the piece of metal was screwed into the new nut plates. We are pleased to report that one size screw fits all and the cowls are easily removed without causing any more stress on the frame. Job well done!



Check out the new cowling as Air crew attempt to push JN out of mud at Wright Field in early October.