

WFC Flyer



Tom Carter taxis in after landing his new-to-him Cherokee 180 on a beautiful February evening (Dan Probst)

Important Dates:

General Meeting
March 11, 2021
WFC Clubhouse

Board Meeting
April 1, 2021
WFC Clubhouse

General Meeting
April 8, 2021
WFC Clubhouse

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Williamson Flying Club Newsletter

March 2021

From the President's Desk by Randy Christian

Hello fellow club members!

I am going to chat a bit this month on a few topics. First being the age-old question, "How do we make the WFC feel more like a club?" This debate / conversation comes up annually. Several years ago, I formed what is now known as the Activities Committee. I have to say that this committee has been a roaring success from all of the positive feedback that we have received. This committee was formed for the purpose of developing and organizing ideas for Club activities.

While the Activities Committee certainly helps foster a Club atmosphere, we understand that it does not stop there. My challenge for the membership is this: if

you have any ideas on what we can do better or differently, please let us know! The best way for us to improve is by being open to new ideas from **all members**, not just those conceived by the

Activities Committee or the board. I invite any member with an idea to reach out to the board and schedule time to present your idea at an upcoming board meeting.

As I have done in the past, I also invite any member to request a time to sit in on a board meeting. It really is a great way for you to see some of what your officers and directors do on a monthly basis and it allows you to become more involved in the process of running the club and airport.

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Williamson Flying Club

Williamson-Sodus Airport (KSDC)
5502 State Route 104
Williamson, NY 14589

Find us on the web at:
www.williamsonflyingclub.com

Board of Directors

President: Randy Christian
Vice President: Brad Roehrig
Treasurer: Bob Herloski
Secretary: Steve Murray

Director, 2019: Paula Sippel
Director, 2020: Lesly Jean-Louis
Director, 2021: Dick Swingly

Contact: bod@williamsonflyingclub.com

Medical Advisor: Dr. Pam Tarkington

"In closing, I will add that we will address these challenges with risk-based decision making. Our number one priority will always be to base our decisions on what is truly best for our beloved Club and airport."

Aviation Quote

"You can always tell when a man has lost his soul to flying... hopelessly committed to stopping whatever he is doing long enough to look up and make sure the aircraft purring overhead continues on course and does not suddenly fall out of the sky. It is also his bound duty to watch every aircraft within view take off and land."

- Ernest K. Gann
Fate is the Hunter

From the President's Desk by Randy Christian

(Continued from page 1)

Next topic: as we are finally starting to see spring on the horizon, "What are our plans for club events?" As it stands now, we are still facing the same challenges with COVID as last spring.

With that being said, I will be having a conversation with the board in March with regards to not only the annual Apple Blossom Pancake Breakfast, but also the Saturday lunches run by Tony Alesci and more. Based on the outcome of that meeting, more information will be made available to the membership during the March 11, 2021 meeting.

With Governor Cuomo's latest communication in regards to festivals and large gatherings, holding events like our pancake breakfast does not look very promising. Below, I have included the current CDC guidelines for gatherings:

Lowest risk: Virtual-only activities, events, and gatherings.

More risk: Smaller outdoor and in-person gatherings in which individuals from different households remain spaced at least 6 feet apart, wear masks, do not share objects, and come from the same local area (e.g., community, town, city, or county).

Higher risk: Medium-sized in-person gatherings that are adapted to allow individuals to remain spaced at least 6 feet apart and with attendees coming from outside the local area.

Highest risk: Large in-person gatherings where it is difficult for individuals to remain spaced at least 6 feet apart

and attendees travel from outside the local area.

As you can see, the pancake breakfast falls directly into the "HIGHEST RISK" category. I know there are some that want to "damn the torpedoes, full steam ahead" on the breakfast. "Just have the breakfast and everything will be OK." However, we really have to balance the risk/reward for the Club. The board will be weighing this issue in early March with a goal of getting answers to the membership at the March general meeting.

In closing, I will add that we will address these challenges with risk-based decision making. Our number one priority will always be to base our decisions on what is truly best for our beloved Club and airport.

Stay safe everyone! Get out there, enjoy the whole world of aviation, KSDC, and the Williamson Flying Club!

Blue skies,

Randy

WFC Board of Directors Election Results

The following members were elected to the WFC Board of Directors at the WFC Annual Meeting on February 11, 2021:

President: Randy Christian
Vice President: Brad Roehrig
Treasurer: Bob Herloski
Secretary: Steve Murray
Director, 2021: Dick Swingly

Cool Places To Fly by Chris Houston

Destination: Francis S. Gabreski Airport (KFOK), Westhampton Beach, NY

Distance: 247 nautical miles

Why It's Cool:

Long Island is densely packed with airports. Among them, Gabreski is a towered field surrounded by Class D airspace with an on-airport diner, [Café Volo](#).

Built in 1943, the airport was known as the Suffolk County Air Force Base until 1969 when it reverted to civilian use. (There is still an Air National Guard presence on the southwest ramp). The field was called Suffolk County Airport until it was renamed for WWII ace Francis "Gabby" Gabreski in 1991. Gabreski commanded the 52nd Fighter-Interceptor Air Wing based on the field during the mid 1960s.

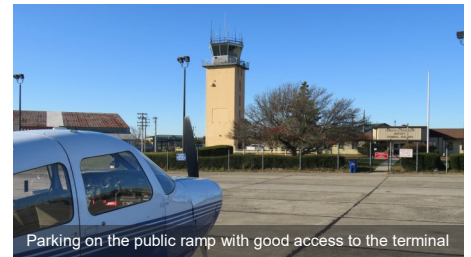
Public transient parking is available near the base of the tower.

Café Volo is in the adjacent terminal building. A gated fence stands between the ramp and the terminal and a code is required to return to the ramp. This is available at the FBO (Sheltair) or from Café Volo staff.

Café Volo features indoor and outdoor seating with a view of the ramp. As airport diners go, it skews toward the fine-dining end of the spectrum. I was craving biscuits and gravy that morning. Café Volo serves theirs with the extra punch of a creole-style sausage gravy. The meal was rounded out with perfectly seasoned home fries and the fresh fruit on the side was a welcome addition. Everything was well-prepared and very tasty. Café Volo is highly recommended!

Tips:

- While fuel is available from Sheltair, full service fuel is costly, currently \$6.71/gal. No self-serve is available. Plan accordingly!



Parking on the public ramp with good access to the terminal



Café Volo is in the airport terminal building



Southern style biscuits with creole style sausage gravy



Sharing the ramp with a kerosene guzzler



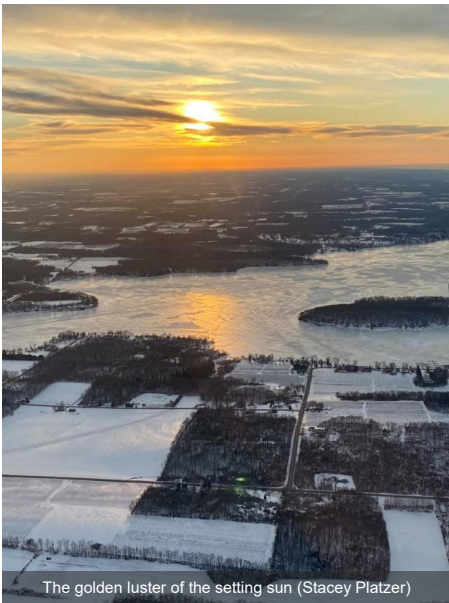
Crossing Long Island Sound en route to KFOK



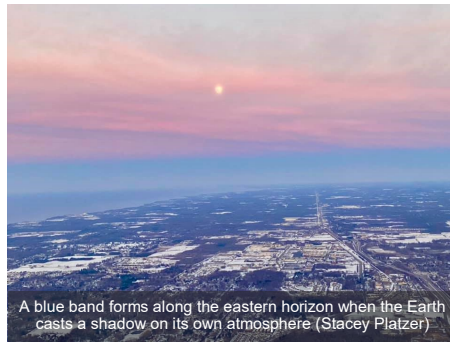
Café Volo has a nice outdoor seating area by the tower

Images contributed by Chris Houston and Stacey Platzer

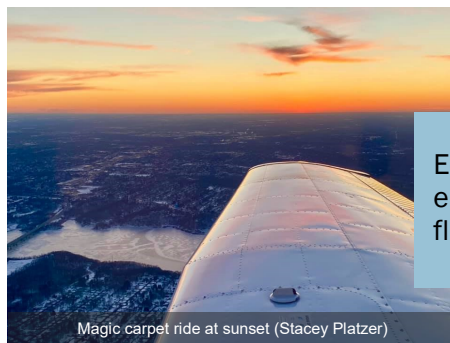
In February, our members enjoyed beautiful sunsets, new destinations, new airplanes, and ice runways! Thanks to all for your contributions!



The golden luster of the setting sun (Stacey Platzer)



A blue band forms along the eastern horizon when the Earth casts a shadow on its own atmosphere (Stacey Platzer)



Magic carpet ride at sunset (Stacey Platzer)

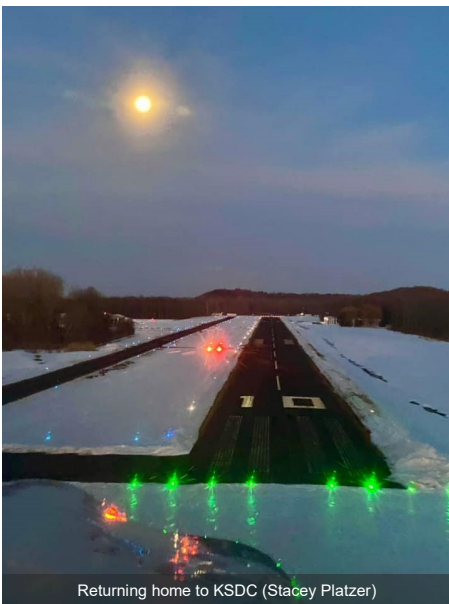
Contribute to the Newsletter!

“Hey! I take some pretty great photos, too! Why aren’t mine in the newsletter?”

We’re always looking for an opportunity to showcase how our members enjoy aviation. Or maybe you have a great story to tell? We’d love to share it. We’ll even help you write it!

Submit your photos and stories to the newsletter by emailing:

Newsletter@williamsonflyingclub.com



Returning home to KSDC (Stacey Platzer)



Ed Ciolkowski fuels during a morning flurry (Chris Houston)



Chris Houston, Paula Sippel, and Ed Ciolkowski at B18



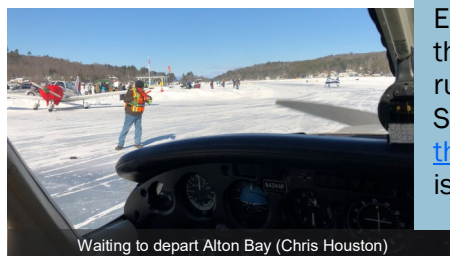
A Globe Swift parked on the ice (Chris Houston)



Parking area of the Alton Bay Ice Runway (Chris Houston)



Aircraft parked at Alton Bay (Chris Houston)



Waiting to depart Alton Bay (Chris Houston)

Ed Ciolkowski made his first landing at the Alton Bay Ice Runway (B18) on February 21st with Chris Houston and Paula Sippel along for the ride ([click here for the video](#)). See the back page of this issue for more information about B18.

Images contributed by Alicia Carter and Dan Probst



Smiling airplane owners! It's been a journey (Alicia Carter)



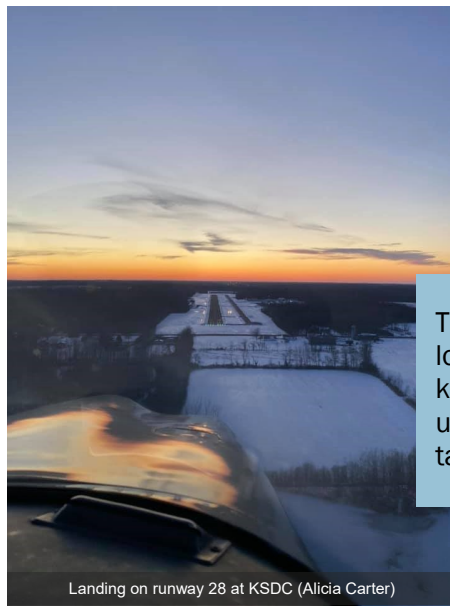
Evening sun masked by dramatic clouds (Alicia Carter)



"Flying thru" (Alicia Carter)



Guilty pleasures taste best aloft (Alicia Carter)



Landing on runway 28 at KSDC (Alicia Carter)

Tom and Alicia Carter took their first local flight in their new-to-them Cherokee 180 and indulged in a guilty pleasure along the way. Per Alicia, fries just taste better at altitude.



There is no excuse for ever getting lost... (Alicia Carter)



Approaching Piseco Lake (Dan Probst)



Left downwind, runway 22 at Piseco (Dan Probst)

Dan Probst made his first foray into the Adirondacks by visiting the Piseco Airport (K09) in N9855W.



55W parked at the Piseco Airport on a lousy beach day (Dan Probst)



Sunset at KSDC (Dan Probst)

Member Spotlight: Mike Shippers by Chris Houston



Member: Mike Shippers
 Ratings: PP-SEL
 Endorsed: Tailwheel, high performance
 Hours: 600
 Role: Activities Co.
 Past Roles: WFC Director, Buildings & Grounds Co., ran car parking for pancake breakfast
 Joined WFC: 2001
 Aircraft: Aeronca Champ

For some, airport noise is a nuisance. But to Mike Shippers, growing up 1.8 miles from the Williamson Sodus Airport, it was a siren song. When he was a child, his parents regularly brought him to the annual Apple Blossom Pancake Breakfast and bought him an airplane ride. Mike loved every minute of it. But like many of us, he did not realize that becoming a pilot was financially viable.

Once he learned that flying was less expensive than he thought, there was nothing standing in his way. He joined the Williamson Flying Club in 2001. Because he was

under the age of 21, his parents had to sign for him when he joined. Despite their support, Mike's mother was dubious about the whole venture. "You're never gonna get me in an airplane," she warned him.

Mike began training about a month before September 11, 2001, initially with Brent Blake, then John Ottney. Ottney soloed Mike on June 10, 2003 in a club Cessna 150 (N8517G). Mike also had time in another C-150, N51126. Unfortunately, both Cessnas met untimely fates, so Mike transitioned to WFC's stalwart Cherokee N9855W, working with CFI John Lauster to prepare for his check ride.

Mike earned his private pilot certificate on March 10, 2004 during a spring characterized by tumultuous weather such that it took one oral session and two flights to finally complete the examination with local legend DPE Bill Law.

After earning his wings, Mike worked every ounce of persuasive charm he could muster and managed to take his mom for a flight.

Since then, Mike has been on a very specific path that started with learning to work with fabric while assisting Jake DeGroot with the restoration of his Taylorcraft. From there, Mike and Jack Fuller embarked on partial restoration of Alan Verbridge's Champ, which needed some fabric work and minor repairs. Their partnership was so fruitful that Mike and Jack started on a second Champ restoration

project. In this case, they did a ground-up restoration on a 1947 tube and rag taildragger, a project that lasted from 2013-2015. When it was complete, Mike started flying the Champ regularly, eventually buying-out Jack to become the Champ's sole owner. As a result, 2/3 of his logged stick time has been in tailwheel aircraft.

Then, opportunity struck. Mike's job at Electromark, a print shop, went overseas. While this may not sound like much of an "opportunity", the availability of state and federal money for post-layoff education allowed Mike to jumpstart a dream to turn his passion for aircraft into a career.

All the pieces came together. Mike's passion for aircraft; a background in metal working, machining, and welding from past careers;

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Member Spotlight: Mike Shippers by Chris Houston

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automotive bodywork experience; hands-on expertise with airframe repair and fabric work from various taildragger projects; and the dollars to fund an A&P certification.

He attended A&P school in Rome under the auspices of the Mohawk Valley Community College from 2015 to 2016. It was an accelerated program that compressed two years worth of material into three semesters. Mike describes the experience as intense and he pushed himself hard to reach the finish line. He describes earning his A&P certificate as the most stressful test situation of his life that included three written exams (general, airframe, and power-plant), an oral exam, and a practi-

cal exam.

On Sunday May 1, 2016, Mike completed his final test and earned his A&P. Ray Chapin (BAC Services) had already agreed to hire Mike as an A&P. Mike was ready to start at BAC the very next day, but Ray wisely counseled him to take a week, bask in his accomplishment, and get some rest. Mike has been with BAC ever since and has accumulated enough hours to earn for his IA (inspection authorization).

Mike credits the Williamson Flying Club, and particularly member Mike Bebernitz, for expanding his horizons. He and Bebernitz flew together often, exploring new airports while sharing flying duties. Mike cites two trips to the famous Alton Bay Ice Runway (B18) with Bebernitz as being among his most memorable flights. The first trip was flown in N1185X. Mike was a relatively green private pilot at the time and was anxious about landing on the ice without watching an experienced pilot do it first. After Bebernitz landed at Alton Bay, they launched with Mike at the controls so that he could log a landing on the ice as well.

Mike's longest single flight leg in the Champ was from the Williamson Sodus Airport to Piseco Airport (K09) in August of 2019. The Champ is not renowned for its speed or endurance (total fuel load is 13 gallons). He arrived at the southern Adirondack airport after two hours of flight with a 30 minute fuel reserve.



Mike Shippers and Mike Bebernitz at the Alton Bay Ice Runway (B18) in 2010



Mike Shippers, Mike Bebernitz and son, and John Clingerman at the Alton Bay Ice Runway in 2014

His longest journey in the Champ was to the biennial National Aerona Association gathering in Middletown, OH where the Champ was originally built. Mike and Alan Verbridge both planned to fly their Champs, but low ceilings and high winds led Alan to scratch the flight. Undeterred, Mike launched at 5:30 am and slogged against a headwind strong enough to drop his ground speed to 53 mph! He planned his route carefully, limiting himself to 1.5 hour legs. He called every airport along the route in advance to verify fuel availability. Despite planning the first stop for

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Alan Verbridge props Mike's Champ in 2018 (Chris Houston)



Mike arrives at a fly-in at Re-Dun Field (Chris Houston)



Mike's restored 1947 Champ 7BCM (Chris Houston)



Mike (3rd from the right) with the WFC at KFZY in 2019 (Chris Houston)

Member Spotlight: Mike Shippers by Chris Houston

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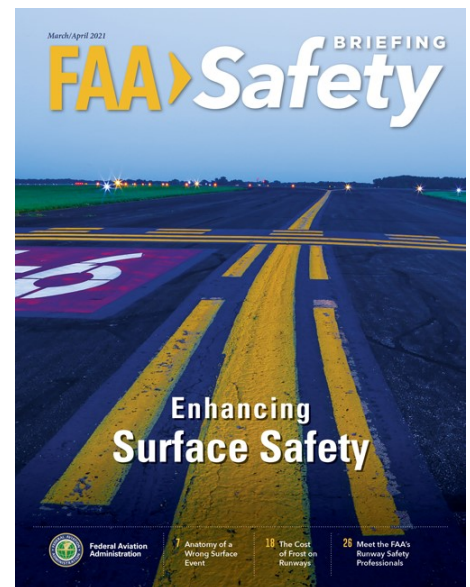
Jamestown, a low ground speed made the Perry Warsaw Airport a better choice. Mike did quick turns at each fueling stop, no more than 5-10 minutes. (It does not take long to fill a 13 gallon tank!) He flew a total of 8.5 hours before reaching Middletown that day, about the same amount of time required for Alan to arrive by car. By contrast, favorable winds on the way home meant a more expedient 5.5 hour return trip.

During his twenty years as a member, Mike has actively supported our Club. He served a three year stint on the board as a Director, chaired car parking operations for the annual Apple Blossom Pancake Breakfast for many years, and volunteered on the Buildings & Grounds committee. A few years ago, Mike, Alan Verbridge, and a few kindred spirits with tail-draggers (or “honorary tail-draggers” like Lee Shippers’ Colt) started a regular Saturday morning short range breakfast fly-out. (Incidentally, Mike and Lee are **not** related despite rumors and shared surnames to the contrary.) Each week, Mike determined a destination and notified the group. In 2019, Mike joined the Activities Committee where he continues to lead these weekly fly-outs (minus a pause from 2020 into 2021 due to COVID-19) with broader visibility to the entire WFC. Mike’s Saturday morning breakfast fly-outs complement Tony Alesci’s Saturday lunches well enough that members can spend the entire day immersed in aviation without worrying about sustenance!

Beyond this early morning culinary camaraderie, Mike has enjoyed the spot landing contests, Tony Alesci’s fantastic “Thanksgiving in October” turkey lunches, annual WFC Christmas parties, and socializing with other members at KSDC over the years.

In twenty years, Mike has transformed from a kid eagerly awaiting his annual airplane ride at the Apple Blossom Pancake Breakfast to a highly valued member of the WFC community. He is an active pilot, a prime mover for promoting the “club atmosphere” of the WFC, and a trusted maintainer of our aircraft. If having Mike join our fellowship was the only value we derived from 60+ years of pancake breakfasts (it’s not, but just imagine), then it was absolutely worth the effort!

Recommended Reading



The March/April 2021 issue of [FAA Safety Briefing](#) is focused on all aspects of airport surface safety. “Feature articles and departments provide a ‘road map’ to the various tools, resources, and strategies airmen can use to steer clear of risk during the ramp-to-runway segment of their journey.”

What’s the Story with the Alton Bay Ice Runway?

Since we’ve mentioned it a couple of times in this issue, the Alton Bay Ice Runway (B18) on New Hampshire’s Lake Winnepesaukee is the only FAA-recognized airport in the continental US consisting of an ice runway. The season is over for 2021 (it was only 2 weeks), but consider it as an adventure for next year! Here are some informational links:

- [Alton Bay Ice Runway Facebook Page](#), one of the best sources for Alton Bay updates directly from manager Paul LaRochelle
- [WFC Flyer, Cool Places To Fly, February 2018](#), please note that there are restrictions in place for flying WFC aircraft to B18, but it can be done
- [Alton Bay in words, pictures, and video from Chris Houston's blog](#) (4 posts)



Chris Houston landing at Alton Bay in 2018
(Ed Ciolkowski)