



Baragwanath

Barometer

February 2010



Editorial

It has been a while since I sent out the last Baragwanath Barometer last year but I'm afraid that things on the flying front have been fairly quiet for me. Would you believe it, I've had more pressing things to do.

Yes, at the end of last year I got married to my long time girlfriend, Brindy Welker (known to most of you as Feebee). We are both very happy about the new journey that we are embarking upon, and those of you who have expressed your well wishes, it is most appreciated.

In this issue we will be going back in time to the yesteryears of South African aviation, which is perhaps appropriate, 2010 being the anniversary of the first powered flight in East London.

We will also show you some amazing photographs of the Vaal River and Vaal Dam in full flood from a few weeks ago when all of the gates were open and the area around the dam wall became the busiest airspace in Jo'burg for a weekend!

There is also a review of the new 'Amelia' film which was aired in cinemas at the end of January – some of the film being shot at Rand Airport as well as other spots around South Africa.

So, I hope that you enjoy this latest issue, and hopefully I'll extract digit and get the next one out more timeously than this one.

Until them, happy landings and keep passing along anything that you would like to have included in the newsletter.

Courtney Watson
cwatson@stithian.com

Opening Shots



Above: An F-18 during a display in Detroit takes full advantage of the low level flying permissions...



Left: Courtney and Brindy Watson exit St. Michael's Church



Forever Flying

As another year begins, I start to look back on the past and I'm drawn towards the moments when I grew up and thought about flying. Even though I am still a youngster, I find that all of those things that used to irritate me as a kid about adults seem to be surfacing in my own consciousness.

Instead of running around the garden with arms outstretched like a fighter plane and making 'dugga dugga dugga' noises at my brother, I feel the uncontrollable urge to watch the news every night to monitor the ever-increasing petrol prices or moan about an unscrupulous politician. I look back on how many chappies I could buy with five cents or how misguided the media and television have become. Things were different "when I was about your age..."

As I look back, I wonder how I could never understand how adults were so cantankerous and why they always complained about the youth being too ill disciplined, the cost of food or the traffic on the way to work. Back then none of these things mattered to me. As long as I had my matchbox Ferrari (the red one which went faster) or the Spitfire model complete with misguided glue dribbles, I was fine. At six years old, I was no more interested in inflation than I was in Pamela from the blue group at the pre-primary.

Days were measured by the quality of an 'Airwolf' episode on TV or whether you could really defuse a nuclear bomb with a pen knife, some bubble gum and a yo-yo like MacGyver. Now I turn on the television and I'm disgusted by the amount of rubbish that is aired, mirroring the opinion of the adults when I was growing up.

There must be a point at which our youthful innocence is

corrupted into adult pessimism and for the life of me, I can't remember when that transition happened. If I could ever get to that junction I'd like to shake the former me into keeping away from that light.

No matter, though, we're all bound to turn into old farts at some point.

What I do remember, though, is my baptism into flying. I was lucky enough to come from an aviation family and when I think back on those swept winged bombing runs that I imagined as I ran around the garden, the landscape seemed to change to the airfield where we flew. That was where I had my first flip in my Dad's silver and blue Tiger Moth. Flicking through old photographs in family albums, that event always stood out. I remember feeling isolated in the front cockpit with the straps locking me into the seat and only just being able to peer outside towards the wingtip. When we took off, it felt as though I was master of the skies...no arms for wings here...this was the real deal. Gentle turns became ferocious wingovers in my 'Calvin and Hobbes' imagination. Subdued movements were thwart with danger and I remember wondering what would happen if I had to bail out...

A few years after that flight, the Tiger was taken home for some maintenance and a bit



My first flight in ZS-UKW



of a rebuild, but that one experience crystallized a sense of anticipation until one day I could truly fly her on my own, with my own license.

It was all about flying back then. I remember my kiddie's infatuation with 'Airwolf' culminating at one of the Margate Airshows, an event that has gained a mythical status amongst the aviation community. I remember clearly the yellow 'Airwolf' T-Shirt I was wearing and the excitement I felt as the theme tune from my favourite show played over the announcement speakers. I remember craning my head in all directions and the aerobatics that were happening in the pit of my stomach. I remember, finally, the image from the valley adjoining the airport, of a black shark of a helicopter that levitated towards us.

"Wow dad, check its AIRWOLF!"

through childish eyes, but in this case, I think my astonishment was well-founded. I'm sure that I was told to keep away from the end of aeroplanes with the spinning things on them, and to stay close to my parents at all times, but in my memory things didn't quite plan out that way. Airshows were a chance for me to escape into my own imagination as I put myself into the shoes of the pilots. This imagination was uprooted from the show and transplanted into the winged warrior that terrorised my brother and friends going 'Neeeeeaw' in the garden.

And then there was the 'Old Lady' Routine. I think that is where my love for J3 Cubs must have come from. These aeries in particular have a face - with doggy ears that are the cooling ducts over the exposed cylinders and the snoopy nose of a spinner. Even though I always knew what was going to happen in this routine, I was always captured by the



Airshows were always time well spent and Margate was always top of my list. Beach in the morning, watching flying in the afternoon, and I remember being absolutely astounded by the amount of aircraft that filled the place. Everything always seems bigger and better

moment, wondering how an old lady could fly from the back, without a pilot in the front with swoops and dives and spirals that seemed to chase the fire truck more than anything else!



And as I grow a bit older and become more cynical about the state of the world, as my elders did before me, the memories of flying and airshows are not in the least bit tarnished. They are part of the reason why flying is so important to me. I am lucky enough to have access to an aeroplane on a regular basis, and the night before a flight I still get those six-year-old Christmas Eve butterflies. I still have the same flying dreams that I had when I was a kid and I still count the days until I'm up in the air again. And when a flying day finally arrives and I strap into the cockpit, I sometimes catch myself going 'dagga dagga dagga' under my breath.

Since I was six years old, I waited to fly, and the culmination of my expectations would always be the first flight on my own, in the Tiger. She was rebuilt, given a new lick of paint, yellow and blue this time, and after some TLC it was back into the skies. We timed this one just right because it was not too long after I achieved my own PPL that she was flying again. I always saw my lessons in the Cessna 150 as a stepping stone towards a place in the pilot's seat of the Tiger Moth, and when I could fly her on my own, she did not disappoint. The photographs of my childhood imagination that had been catalogued and shelved came back to life when I sat in that biplane.

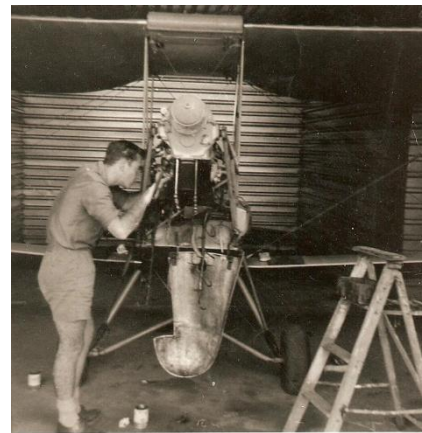
Yes, there are responsibilities that go along with flying, but at the same time, I think that some of the youthful romance is what keeps the sport alive. So when I think about inflation, politics and what I could buy with ten rand when I was a lightie, I am turning

into a cantankerous old bastard, just like the rest of us. But flying dissolves all of that and at the end of the day, aeroplanes still go 'neeeauuw', even though I can tell the difference between a DC-4 'neeeauuw' and a Tiger Moth 'neeeauuw'. I still smile from startup to shutdown and I still toss and turn with excitement when the weekend comes and I can go flying again.

It's this childhood innocence brought back to life that makes me run outside when I hear something fly overhead. It's when I take long drives along scenic mountain passes or next to the sea that, in my mind's eye, I can still see myself twisting and turning through the sky overhead and my imagination still grips a joystick with my right hand and kicks at rudder pedals with my feet.

At heart, I guess I will always be flying.

Courtney Watson





Of This and That

This summer has been hectic when it comes to the amount of rainfall that we have experienced. Roads have been flooded, potholes created and the Vaal Dam has been spewing water down the river in torrents that can only be described as unbelievable.

At one point, all of the sluice gates were open, and the effects along the Vaal River were quite astounding.

Some of us, including the Gills and the Watsons, decided to venture towards the crowded dam wall, adding to the busy airspace overhead. Unfortunately I did not have my camera, but Andre du Plessis kindly allowed us to use some of his shots.

The spray could be seen from about three miles out, and I was really glad to be up in the sky instead of on the ground where traffic was blocking up the entire road system.

For those of you who couldn't make it, this is what the dam looked like:



Heading away from the dam, towards the power station and then later Baragwanath, the river was in torrents. Low lying land was converted into swamp and along the banks, we could pick out many roofs of rondavels and braai areas, the rest of the buildings being submerged under water.





Club News

This one dropped in during November for a visit and some fuel!!!!???

Apparently they could not pump fuel from their main tank to the Aux turbine tank and had to top-up by hand.

Thanks to Johan Maritz for the photograph (taken from a cellular phone camera)



Some of the regular faces outside 'The Toy Box'.

Peet Taljaardt, Noel Otten, Mike McAuley, Colin Didcott, John Howse



We have had a number of windy days at the airfield of late, and I know that many of us have been tearing our hair out at the prospect of being stuck on the ground instead of being

up in the sky. Alan Hanes and his son seem to have the right idea, though...let the wind work for you...



This is a bit overdue, but in mid-November Ian P (AKA Spy) took the Chipmunk for a flip. This is what Mike Gill had to say about it:

The Chippie has been owned Brian Z and Ian P since old Bara days and still is. Kevin at Krugersdorp did a refurb on the aircraft and it therefore spent a good year or so at FAKR but has been back at Bara for probably 16 to 18

months or so.

Unfortunately it has barely flown at all lately



but I think that is about to change. There were a few little jobs that needed doing on the aircraft and I think most of them are now complete and therefore, there is no excuse.

Ian P flew her on Sunday and was all smiles when he landed saying how he had forgotten what a lovely airie it is to fly.

I know I have not seen it fly for 17 years (I just was not around for the ferry to FAKR flights etc) because the last time I saw it fly was in the hands of my father. He checked the logbook and confirmed that that to be 17 years ago.

It sleeps in the big BI hangar.

Honda engine. For my money it looks like a baby Mew Gull.



This is also a bit late, but we have had another interesting aircraft taking to the skies – owned by Carlton. It is a GK-1, basically a KR-1 with redesigned wings and a beautifully sounding

A whole lot has been going on lately when it comes to flying – the newest project being the McAuley’s purchase of Bill’s Citabria (for those of you who don’t know, airbatic spelt backwards).



Many man hours have been spent in refurbishing this one, with Kelly and Mike putting in the hard work. Thanks Kelly for the photographs!



And on another matrimonial front, Mike and Nicky got married this year! Congratulations and from all of us at Baragwanath, we would like to wish you all the very best for your future.



Before I forget, we have had a new arrival at FASY in the form of a beautiful Piper J3 Cub owned by Teeuns van Veuren, welcome!



The Brian/Ian Harvard has also been put back into the skies, but unfortunately bought by a pilot who has taken her to another airfield. It was fantastic to hear the sound of a proper radial at Baragee, though, even if it was only briefly.



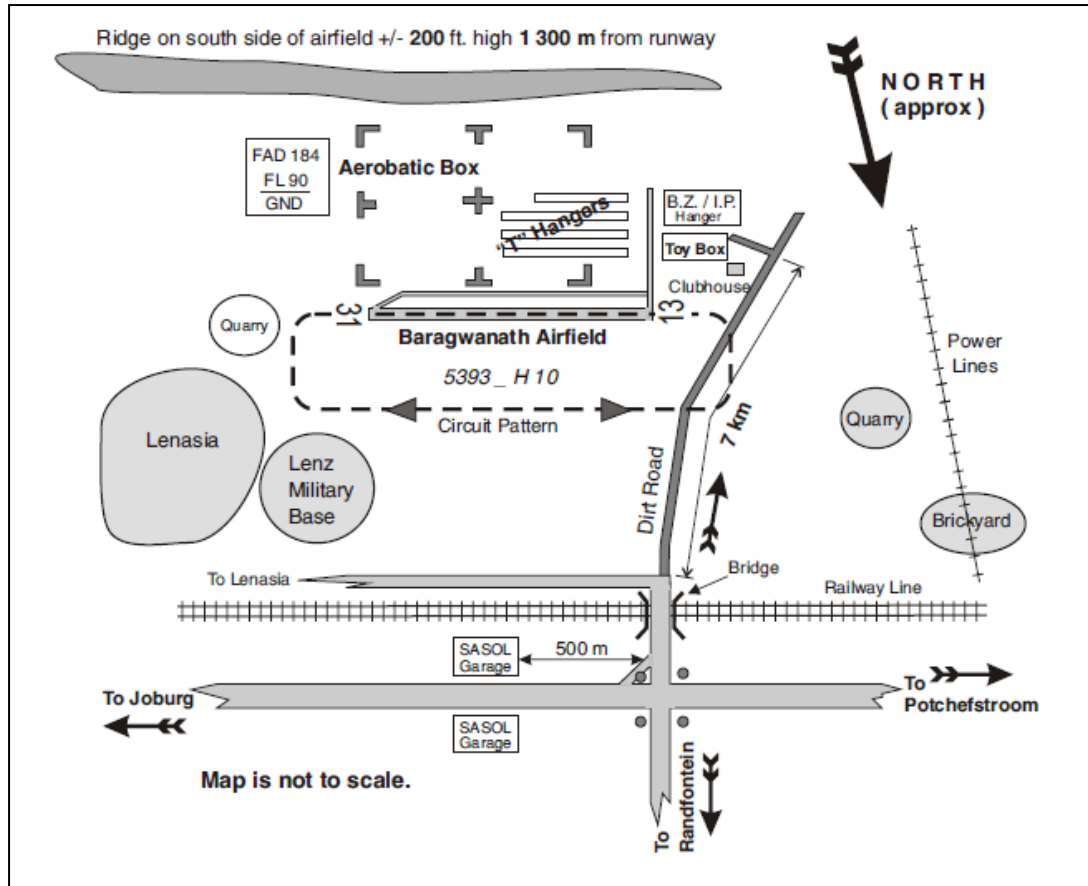
So, lots has been happening since the last newsletter and hopefully we'll have another lunch fly in soon to add to an already busy year!





Baragee Information

Noel put this together a little while ago, and I thought that it might be useful if any of you decide to invite other pilots to FASY.

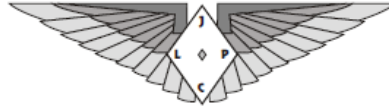


Important Notes :-

- 1) **Airfield Co-ordinates :- S 26° 19' 30" E 27° 46"**
- 2) **Radio Frequency :- 122.6 (There is no official tower control. Traffic information only on the day. Broadcast your position and intentions).**
- 3) **"Aerobatic Box" active all day !!! No flying through the "Box"!!!**
- 4) **All Circuits to North side of Runway. Right Hand on 31 and Left Hand on 13**
- 5) **Visiting Car Parking at back of "Toy Box" and around Clubhouse only. No parking on or near taxiways.**
- 6) **If driving, beware of many speed traps, especially in region of SASOL Garages. The speed limit is 80 km/hr !!!**
- 7) **Areas around hangars restricted for use by aircraft. Aircraft parking in designated areas only.**
- 8) **Limited amount of fuel is available. Cash only!**
- 9) **No "beat-ups" over hangars, aircraft and people !!!**



Chairman's Chatter



Johannesburg Light Plane Club

(an incorporated association not for gain)

Registration No.05 / 02285 / 08

05 February 2010

Hangar Rentals and Other Issues

February 2010

Attention:- JLPC Members

Dear Fellow Members,

a) Hangar Rentals

Several of you have recorded your objections to the manner in which the increases in the Hangar rentals were imposed without receiving prior notice of the changes taking effect.

I am entirely responsible for this fiasco! I had discussed with Courtney Watson the preparation and distribution of the December 2009 Baragee Baraometer newsletter. Courtney had other more important arrangements to attend to, (viz. his wedding), and I simply forgot to follow through with alternative arrangements to have a newsletter produced and circulated in which the notification of the increases would have been highlighted.

It is customary for the committee to review all fees, rentals and wages at the beginning of each calendar year. It is equally customary, (and courteous), for the members to be notified in advance. This was not done and I apologise to one and all.

b) Hangar Condition / Standard

Some members are under the impression that the committee is differentiating between hangars which have "hard surface" floors and those which don't. This is simply not the case! Four years ago, the committee decided to initiate a programme of repair and up-grading of the airfield and its structures. The first project was the up-grading of the taxiways serving rows 3 and 4. The next, which began about a year ago, was the repairs to the hangars in row 4.

Many of the hangar tenants have, over the years, up-graded their hangars at their own expense, e.g "hard surface" floors and "hard aprons in front of the hangars. But not all have done this. The club has provided a mains fed power grid which members have, at their own expense, tapped into for electrical power in their hangars. Those who have done this have been, (or at least should have been), billed a fixed monthly charge for this service. Some have tapped into power grid without informing the committee and have been drawing electricity at no charge for years.



About a year ago, the committee decided that a programme of upgrading the hangars to bring them all to a similar standard and condition would be undertaken; (i.e. "hard surface" floors and electricity for all and later on, water as well). A survey was then conducted to establish the exact status of each and every hangar.

Note:- This survey had some other positive outcomes for the club apart from establishing who was accessing electrical power for free. Some hangars had "squatters" in them who have now, I am happy to report, become fully paid-up members. Another beneficial outcome has been the discovery that 13 of the 68 hangars have not been used for the purpose for which they are intended, viz. housing of aircraft, but rather for all other reasons. The committee has yet to take action in these cases, but already, some hangar space has been recovered for the use of aircraft, which is a very positive gain.

There was another, very important reason, for conducting the survey! We need to put a value on the assets of the club. In view of the very distinct possibility that we will have to move from the site in the not too distant future, we need to establish the real "worth" of the club's assets so that, when the time comes, we can lodge an accurate claim for compensation.

At the committee meeting in November, it was decided to set down a formula that could be applied universally for the renting of the club's hangars, including those that are privately owned. I can assure all, that there is no "extra" charge being levied at present on those tenants who have "hard surface" floors. There is an extra charge for electrical services. That has always been the case! We have also established the area of each hangar and have fixed a rate for the larger hangars; (some "T" hangars are up to 25% larger than others).

I hope you accept my apology, and, more importantly, have a clear understanding of our intentions and plans for the club. A new "Hangar Lease Agreement" has also been drawn up which we will present to members in due course.

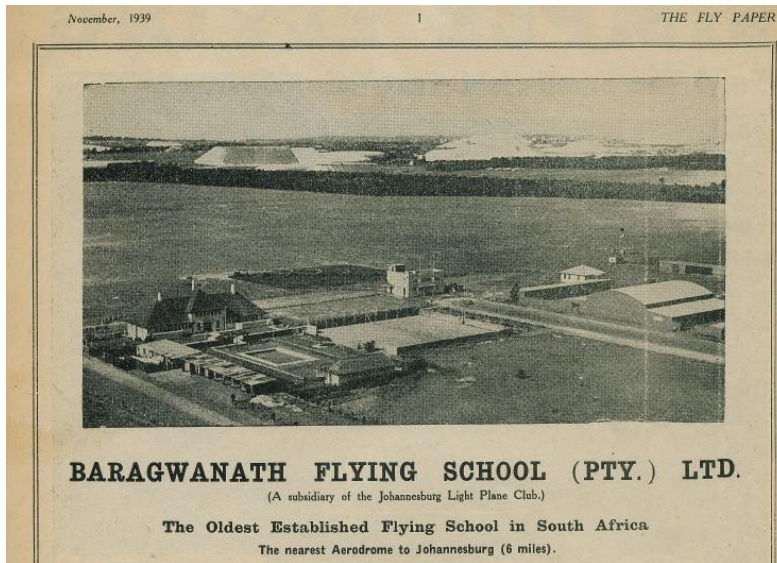
Yours sincerely

Noel Otten
Chairman JLPC.

Copy: All Members,
Committee Members
Secretary (Mrs. D. Paterson)



Blast from the Past



Thanks to Noel for the following newspaper clipping which I lifted off Avcom recently. Old Baragwanath...

Review - Amelia

We were all expecting someone to finally put together an amazing flying film that would keep us riveted to our seats, with real flying (no computer generated images – CGI) and an inspiring storyline.

This promise came in the form of 'Amelia' the film directed by Mira Nair and starring Richard Gere, Hilary Swank, Ewan McGregor and Christopher Eccleston. The film makers flew out a Lockheed Electra from France to South Africa, and much of the filming was done along our coastline as well as at Rand Airport.

So naturally, we were all very excited about the project, and in particular, the prospect of seeing some of our own aircraft in the film. Bob Hay and the Watsons were lucky enough to get involved with the filming, and if you watch 'Amelia', you might recognise the transformation of Rand Airport into Miami Airport.

What was even more amazing was that the shots taken at Rand were not left on the cutting room floor, which is almost



Expected in a film of this magnitude. Bob Hay's Chev is featured in the film, as well as the Watson's Tiger Moth (the blue and yellow one with a stuck on US registration) and Norton motorcycle.

Patrick Watson can even be recognised in one of the shots dressed up as an extra and working beneath the cowling of a silver tiger moth!



Unfortunately, however, I feel that these were the only highlights of the film.

This is only my point of view, but my main criticism of the film was that it was disjointed with a number of sub plots that started off, and then went nowhere.

The writers also chose to run the story as a series of flashbacks while Amelia Earheart attempts her flight around the world. The lack of synchronisation between this, and her waypoints along her epic journey also makes it very confusing for the viewer. At one minute we are in Papua New Guinea and the next we are on the outskirts of Africa, or on a tumultuous ocean crossing. So for me, the geography wasn't really there.

I also feel that it was a mistake to try and turn the life of one of America's aviation heroines into a love story, because the connection between George Putnam (Richard Gere), Gene Vidal (Ewan McGregor) and Amelia Earheart (Hilary Swank) is thin to say the least.

The directors chose play it safe when broaching any of the theories as to the Electra's disappearance and I feel that the film was more about a woman who just happened to try and fly around the world that the real Amelia.

I expected to see an Indiana Jones type of adventure, but from an airbourne perspective, following a linear journey around the world. There is some of this, but I feel that the die hard attitude of primitive navigation and the aura of what such record breaking flights must have been like, is sorely missed. Swank is the splitting image of Earheart, though, and credit must be given to that side of the film, at least.

I was hugely disappointed with the storyline, but thankfully it was resurrected by some real flying, and I think that seeing the Electra at Rand Airport made the movie come to life a bit more for me.



So, go and watch 'Amelia' because when there is flying footage, it is stunning. You might appreciate the Rand Airport/Miami Airport sequences, but also snippets over the Transkei, Knysna and various African landscapes.

What I would do when the DVD comes out is copy all of the flying footage into one long music montage and that would be a film really worth watching.





Parting Shot

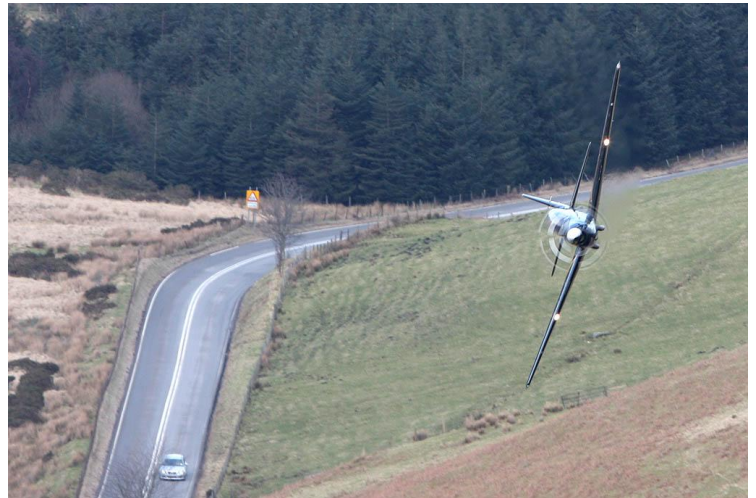
I must extend my thanks, as always, to those who have let me use their photographs. Mike Gill in particular is very generous with his images and Kelly McAuley has also produced some absolutely fantastic shots as she has become more involved at the airfield.

I've chosen two pictures, therefore, to end this magazine, a Spitfire sent from an overseas friend, and the other courtesy of Kelly. I haven't asked her if I could use this one, but I hope she doesn't mind the surprise and the end of this newsletter.

I hope that you have enjoyed it! If you have any comments or anything that you would like to have included, please don't hesitate to email me at cwatson@stithian.com.

All input is most welcome particularly because this is the Baragwanath voice piece, not just my own musings on flying.

Until next time, happy landings.



Aviation Humour

In the early 1930's, a farmer and his wife went to a fair. The farmer was fascinated by the airplanes and asked a pilot how much a ride would cost.

"\$10 for 3 minutes," replied the pilot. "That's too much," said the farmer.

The pilot thought for a second and then said, "I'll make you a deal. If you and your wife ride for 3 minutes without uttering a sound, the ride will be free. But if you make a sound, you'll have to pay \$10." The farmer and his wife agreed and went for a wild ride. After they landed, the pilot said to the farmer, "I want to congratulate you for not making a sound. You are a 'Maybe so,'" said the farmer, "But I gotta tell ya, I almost screamed when my wife fell out."



ANY COMMENTS TO cwatson@stithian.com