

Rotorcraft Chapter 35 hosts fly-in at local airport

BY RICK HAYES
SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

MT. VERNON — Several spectators visited the Mt. Vernon Airport on Saturday for the second annual St. Louis Popular Rotorcraft Association Chapter 35 Fly-In.

Larry Miller of Centralia, former president of the organization, said Mt. Vernon is an ideal location for the fly-in.

"Well Chris [Collins] and all his guys here are just absolutely fantastic. We got welcomed with open arms. Chris thinks they're neat, and of course, we do or we wouldn't be buying them. It's a central location and there's a lot of hotels and motels and a lot of facilities. Even the restaurant here is a drawing card. The man in there [Charlie Wilkey] cooks good food," Miller said.

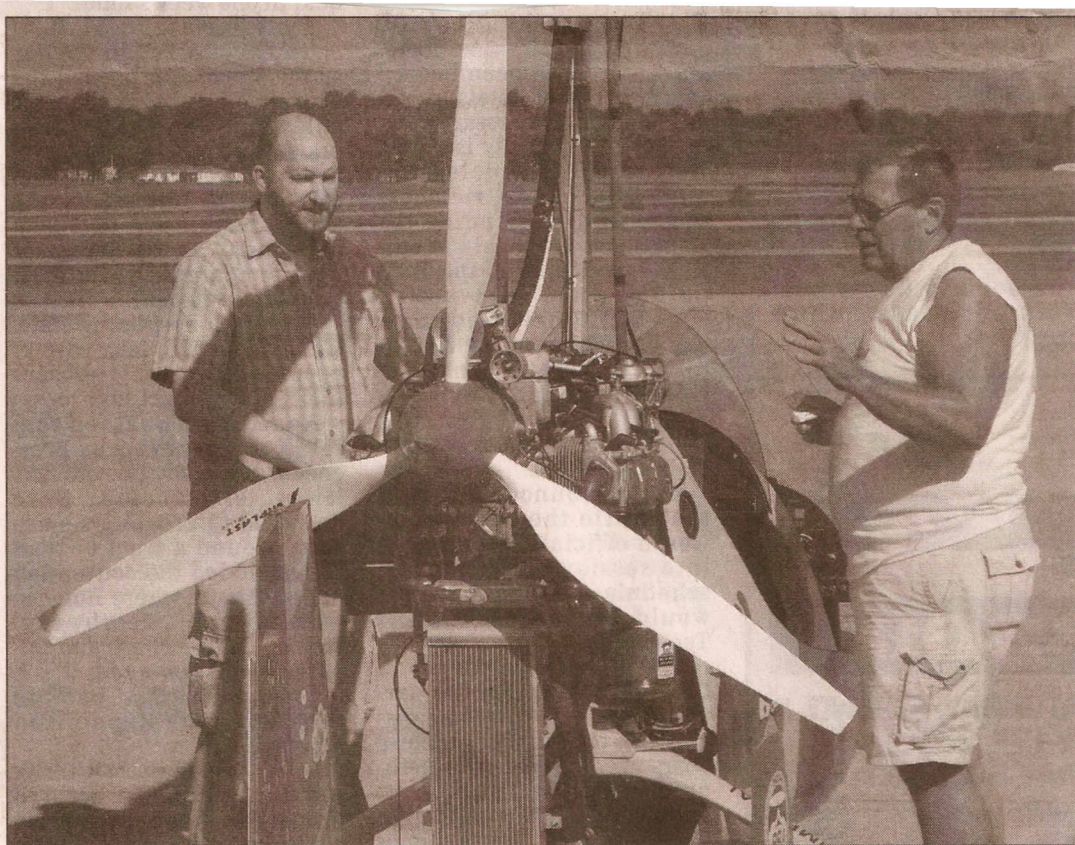
The St. Louis chapter is part of the national Rotorcraft Association.

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Sentinel Photo/RICK HAYES

IN THE PILOT'S SEAT — Josh Parks, 10, of Mt. Vernon, gets to sit in Raymond Brown's Dominator gyroplane during a fly-in Saturday at the Mt. Vernon Airport.



Sentinel Photo/RICK HAYES

GYRO TALK — Greg Gremminger, RIGHT, representing Magni Gyro, talks to David Hoover of Bloomington about his gyroplane during the St. Louis Popular Rotorcraft Association Chapter 13 gyroplane fly-in at Mt. Vernon Airport on Saturday.

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tion, based in Mentone, Ind., which Miller says is a small town about the size of Carlyle.

"Chapter 35 meets in Greenville, another good airport, that's centrally located for our 35 members. Not everybody is flying gyro right now. I'm working on mine, so I bummed a ride today," Miller said. "It's [Mt. Vernon] a good, central location and gives us a chance to get the word out about gyros."

The group formerly met in Shelbyville, but moved its fly-in to the Mt. Vernon facility last year.

"I think the thing that is most important is the activity, not just for the airport, but for the community too because all these visitors are from somewhere else and they're spending money in our community, staying at the motels, eating in the restaurants and shopping here," said Collins.

"I used to read about these gyroplanes when I was in high school in Popular Mechanics and you could actually buy a kit, put it together yourself and teach yourself how to fly," explained Raymond Brown of Shattuc. "They got a bad reputation at that time because people wouldn't go through

the procedures. Farmers were buying them and killing themselves because they weren't going through all the training procedures. Training is very important."

Brown said he joined the club two years ago, because, "It was something I wanted to do before I got too old. It's very interesting. I really enjoy it."

Magni Gyro, a company in Italy, provides kits and helps people build their own gyrocopters. Magni representative Greg Gremminger said, "Gyroplanes can do a lot of things that airplanes can't do and that's what makes them fun for us. They won't stall. The auto gyro evolved into the helicopter which is a much more complex machine. The value of an auto gyro or a gyroplane

is that it's very simple. Even though it has a rotary wing on it, it has fewer moving parts than any airplane." He continued, "It's probably 10 times much less mechanically complex than a helicopter. Gyroplanes won't stall so you can maneuver them very quickly, you can fly at zero miles per hour, they have a very high speed ranges from zero to 115 mph."

Gremminger also noted gyro pilots like to fly in the wind.

"When you have a gyroplane and you're skilled in it, you can fly in heavy winds. Actually, that's more fun. When the wind is blowing we'll go out to the airport because it's fun and no one else will fly, so the airport is empty."

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