

GOSPORT

Volume 2 Issue 1

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"A Gosport Tube was a voice tube used by flight instructors in the early days of military aviation to give instructions and directions to their students. It was invented by flying instructor *Robert Raymond Smith-Barry* at the School of Special Flying he opened at Gosport [England] in 1917." (from Wikipedia)



OLD GLORY

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Member of the Month



John Allard

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Member's Corner

There's an old saying, "Ask And You shall Receive". I asked and received a suggestion in return from our Captain.

Wayne suggested a column for our members to share bits of knowledge or experience that our readers might find useful.

See page 5, column 2 for the first article.

Thanks. Wayne

Words of Wisdom

THERE IS NONE SO BLIND AS HE THAT WILL NOT SEE!

JANUARY MEETING

Jan 7th 18:00



John's Corner



John Allard

All you have to do is...

Have you ever gotten into something that turned out to be more complicated and more difficult than you expected it to be? Sure you have – we all have. They often start with someone saying, "All you have to do is...". Many times the someone telling me that is me. I had one of those yesterday. It's all about an airport...but then, what isn't?

I had noticed some time ago that the default Orlando International Airport (KMCO) in FS9 has only three runways, while the real deal has four. At some point in the not-too-distant past, Orlando opened a fourth parallel runway, 17L/35R. The new strip lies a fair distance to the east of what was formerly 17/35 – far enough away so that simultaneous ILS operations can be conducted. FS9 remained blissfully unaware that KMCO had been upgraded and stubbornly insisted that there were only three runways there. For some reason, I let things like that gnaw away at me – it's just not right.

At the time I first became aware of the discrepancy in FS9 I made a half-hearted attempt to make it right. I went to AVSIM and found an updated AFCAD file for KMCO and installed it. Sometimes freeware is worth every penny – in this case, it wasn't. It was horrible! There were

gaps in the taxiways, taxiway signs in the middle of the taxiways, auto-gen trees, buildings on the ramps and runways – it was just awful. I had a quick look at what it would take to repair all that – it did have the fourth runway, after all. After driving around the freeware airport in the Just Flight Follow-Me van, I concluded that there was just too much wrong, not only in the new area, but all over the airport. Bad idea... You can't make chicken salad from chicken manure. I deleted the file.

Some time later I decided that I just had to do something to make this right. I decided to take a close look at the 3-runway AFCAD file I was already using for KMCO. That one was an add-on, having come with my favorite traffic program, Just Flight's Traffic 2005. I should explain AFCAD files, in case some of you are not familiar with them.

AFCAD is a freeware product by Lee Swordy – available for download on the Web. It is a very powerful tool for modifying airports in MS Flight Simulator. It uses a graphical, CAD-like interface and allows the user to create or modify FS airport facilities at will. The files it saves are in the bgl format, as used by the sim for scenery objects. Airport files are usually referred to as AFCAD files, though they actually have a bgl file extension. Not all bgl's are airports, but all airports are bgl's. Sometimes many airports are contained in a single bgl – that's particularly true with the FS "stock" airports. Airport bgl's (AFCAD files) contain the details that FS needs to render what you see on your monitor when you are there.

So, back to our story. By the way, I didn't intend this to be a how-to article. My object here is not to give detailed instructions for doing what I did, but just to relate the trials and tribulations of this little exercise.

Using the Traffic 2005 AFCAD for Orlando as a starting point seemed like a good idea as it already had all the many parking spots at the four air-side gate areas and at the west side cargo ramp, which is huge. The parking positions are defined and assigned to the various airlines, mak-

ing the heavy AI traffic there fairly orderly and well-behaved. That aspect alone can be a daunting task when working with the file for a major airport that has a lot of AI traffic coming and going. Using that Traffic 2005 AFCAD file as a basis would save me re-creating all that. I decided to begin there and made a working copy of the T2005 Orlando AFCAD file to play with.

I began collecting data on the new runway. I used Google Earth, of course. You can't beat a top-down photo as a guide for getting the details right. I also found several real-world flight planning sites that had excellent data on the airport and each of the runways. The US Government NACO web site supplied the Airport/Facilities Directory article for the airport and the approach plates for each runway. Armed with more information than I could ever hope to use, I fired up AFCAD, opened the 3-runway version of the airport and began to hack away at it.

I learned a lot about modifying airports over the next five or six hours. Yes, it took that long. It seems that each item I added or fixed made it necessary to deal with two or three more. Such is life – the devil's in the details. I should point out that what I undertook is probably out near the far end of the complexity scale for editing airports. I don't want to scare anyone off from trying some more modest things on your favorite FS airport. It's not always this complicated and AFCAD makes it into a non-programming evolution that's really a lot of fun.

Using the data from the various sources and the Google Earth image as a guide, I plodded through placing the new runway and the parallel taxiway. There were a plethora of details to be attended to there; defining hold-short lines for each taxiway connection to the runway (eight of them!!!), creating FS "Start Positions" at each end, selecting the lighting and striping options, etc. All that is not so difficult to do, but in the aggregate is not done in the blink of an eye either. There was much switching back and forth between AFCAD and the reference sites – thank God for dual monitors and the multi-tasking capabilities of Windows.

After adding the new runway strange things began to happen with its sister runway, the former 17/35. It seems obvious in hindsight, but it can't be 17/35 any more – now that there is a companion strip it has to be 17R/35L. That required some housekeeping in the properties of some of the already existing objects and provided another valuable lesson in the Law of Unintended Consequences which states, amongst other things, that no good deed ever goes unpunished.

The next task was placing the nav aids. I found a handy little table at a flight planning site that showed each ILS at Orlando with frequency, ID, approach course and markers. I was pleasantly surprised at how easy all that was to add in AFCAD, never having used those features before. Mr. Swordy did some fine work on that piece of software. After double-checking that the four original KMCO ILSs were already there and correct (they were) I added the two new ones with the correct frequencies and IDs and also placed Middle and Inner Markers for each.

By the time I had finished the bulk of the work in AFCAD I was busy congratulating myself for a job well done as I kicked off FS to have a look. I should have known better. Once in the sim I found all the taxiways showing correctly, but only bits and pieces of the new runway visible. A ground-level survey in the Follow-Me van quickly revealed the problem. The gently rolling ground in the area had the runway cutting through small hilltops. Where it passed through them it couldn't be seen because it was buried, and where exposed it was bridging shallow valleys. That wouldn't do.

The curving yellow taxiway line connections to the new runway seemed very odd too, with the yellow lines seeming to float above the runway that they were supposedly painted on. They looked OK when static but as soon as you moved there was relative motion between the line and the underlying runway surface – almost disorienting and obviously not correct. Back to the old drawing board.

There's a concept in FS scenery operations called "flattening" that is used for taking the lumps and bumps out of the ground where an airport is to be placed. It's not difficult once you understand it, but I didn't. I read a little and ended up copying what I found in other add-on airports. The data lives in a file called "scenery.cfg" in the FS root folder. It is all text, so is easily modified. Seeing the formatting of the other entries allowed me to decipher the structure that FS expected and soon I had moved a hundred thousand cubic yards of Florida soil, chopping off hilltops and filling valleys without so much as an environmental impact statement, building permit or contractor's license – no bribes or kickbacks either. I'm expecting a knock at the door any minute from the authorities. No doubt I entirely wiped out the last toe-hold of a half-dozen endangered species of earthworms, slugs and other vitally important creatures, and made hundreds of alligators homeless, but I'm completely unrepentant. Let 'em move to Gainesville – there's a "Swamp" there.

After some further searching, the taxiway line issue became clear. I had used the real-world elevation of 90 feet for the new runway, but the rest of the airport was flattened in FS at 96 feet. Once I raised the new runway six feet by moving some more virtual earth (i.e. changing a number in the AFCAD properties for the runway), the taxiway paint adhered to the runways as intended and everything behaved correctly. It turned out to be an easy fix to what initially looked like a very complex problem. If I ever see that effect again, I'll know what to do.

The last operation was to generate exclude files. If you're not familiar with them, exclude files tell the FS auto-gen scenery engine, "Don't put anything here". They're just the thing for fixing that remote grass strip with an eighty-foot tree growing in the middle of the approach path. At Orlando I had trees and buildings encroaching on the pavement in many of the newly added areas and several other places where there were rows of inappropriate buildings in locations too close to the airport facilities.

There's a freeware utility called ExcBuilder that can be used to create exclude files, more of those bgl's used by FS to render scenery – or in this case, to not render it. It's done by defining rectangles which must be oriented along the cardinal compass points. I suppose it would be possible to just cover the entire airport with one big exclude rectangle but the next time I do something the easy way will be the first time. I chose to do it with several smaller, individual exclude areas, leaving stands of auto-gen trees where I could. If you've been to KMCO in person, you know there are many trees on the airport property and I wanted to keep as much of that "feel" as possible.

A final obstacle was a line of high-voltage power line towers that passed between the new runway and the older pre-existing one. For the most part they were not a problem, since they are lined up parallel with the runways and almost midway between them - quite a distance away from either. As luck would have it, however, one tower fell squarely in the middle of one of my new connecting taxiways. I suspect that the whole line of towers was somehow placed in FS as a single object because I had no luck making the offending tower go away, despite trying to exclude groups of the towers in several combinations. If you can't move Mohammed, I guess you just have to move the mountain, so I elected to put a non-RW dogleg in the taxiway to avoid the obstacle. It looks better than it sounds and I'm happy with the way it came out.

Overall the project was a success. Driving around, everything looks plausible, if not perfectly true to the real airport. The taxiway dogleg is probably the biggest discrepancy. A sure way to test the hidden layout of the taxiway and runway connectors and such things is by observing AI traffic for a while. I did that at a busy time and saw no issues. There were no takeoffs from the new runway because the ones nearer the terminal areas were handling the volume well. Landings were taking place from the south on all four runways, however, and the AC all seemed to be taxiing off to their gates without any backups form-

ing. It all seems to work. There's still a little cosmetic tweaking to do here and there, but the basic mission is accomplished. The KMCO I now see in FS9 has four runways and they mirror the real world quite well.

This was a great learning experience for me. I'm a strong believer that keeping the little grey cells busy is important in retirement. I try to think hard at every opportunity, if I don't fall asleep first. This little chore was harder than most, but I did manage to stay awake through it. It fixed the original problem, left me with a feeling of accomplishment and gave me something to write about this month. All in all, it was a worthwhile enterprise, I'd say.

I'm ever marveling at the depth of this hobby of ours. Its strength lies in the fact that you can delve as deeply as you care to in the intricacies of FS and the associated add-ons, but nothing requires it. At whatever depth of immersion you choose for yourself, including almost none at all, FS functions well and is quite satisfying and reasonably complete at that level. If you want more and choose to wade in deeper, well, it goes a long, long way. However far in you choose to go, there will be others there too, almost always willing to help. There will be more people too, still further out, beckoning you to, "...come on, the water's fine."

I came away with a new appreciation for the facility at KMCO, which is a major air terminal by anyone's definition. It's four parallel north-south runways, the shortest of which is the 9,000 foot new one, have six ILS installations between them. The pair of runways to the west of the terminal facilities lie too close together for simultaneous ILS operations, so one has an ILS at the south end and the other has one at the north. The other two runways, those to the east of the terminals, including the new one, have separate ILSs at each end of each runway. Only one of the six ILS approach paths has an outer marker, that lying on the field at the smaller Orlando Executive airport (KORL) a few miles to the north. All six of the ILS runways do have middle and inner markers however. There must be a staggering amount

of radio gear to be calibrated and maintained there.

That runway layout gives KMCO the ability to have three simultaneous, parallel ILS runways whether they are operating with approaches from the north or the south. If you've ever looked at the area using one of the on-line flight trackers, it's very obvious how the ATC folks are sorting the incomings into three distinct queues. I can only imagine that the Keystone Cops would smile knowingly at whatever happens when the wind shifts and they have to invert the process on the fly. It makes me think that sometimes the real world does a pretty decent job of simulating our hobby. I wonder if they know about AISmooth?

* * *

I'd be very pleased to hear from any readers of this piece, whether you enjoyed it or not. I'm always happy to have comments, corrections or, most particularly, suggestions for future columns. You can e-mail me at allardjd@earthlink.net

Members Corner

If you want a fine FSX airplane then you might just want to download the Cessna 152.

FREE FSX Cessna 152 Download from FSInsider and Just Flight

To download directly:

http://us.downloadserver.justflight.com/fsinsider/jf_fsinsider_c152.exe

Another good plane that can be used in FS9 or FSX is the Astra PC7. This is a fully aerobatic aircraft and is a joy to fly. After you read the manual and do a few touch and goes to get use to it then switch to "Tower View" and be overjoyed with the way this plane responds to your every move.

It is available on AVSIM all you need to do is search for Astra PC7.

Wayne Knowles

Member of the Month



John Allard

I was born on Christmas Eve in 1946, in the first wave of what came to be known as the post-war Baby Boom. My birthplace and home town during my growing-up years was Ludington, Michigan, a small town of about 10,000 (still). If you've never heard of it I'm not surprised. I lived there about 20 years in total and I've barely heard of it. Ludington is the kind of place where you are born, grow up while being educated and nurtured, then leave forever to find gainful employment.

Ludington lies on the western shore of Michigan, about half-way up, more or less across Lake Michigan from Milwaukee. It was mainly a railroad town in those days. The town was literally split by a large rail yard that lead to the docks. Ludington was the eastern terminus for a fleet of large train ferries that hauled railcars, passengers and their automobiles across the lake. That operation went on summer and winter, 7 days a week, night and day. There were seven in operation during my growing-up years. These were sizeable ships, about 450 feet long and able to carry up to 28 railcars inside the hull.

They sailed to three ports in Wisconsin with a 4-6 hour one-way crossing time and were truly all-weather capable. Neither storms nor winter ice kept them off the lake and there was always something interesting going on to watch, either

the comings and goings of the shipping or at least the loading and unloading, which was something to captivate a growing boy for hours.

The railroad operated "the boats", as they were called, and was the major employer in the town. At that time it was the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad, later morphing into Chessie Systems and has now become CSX.

Going back is bittersweet now. The boats are all gone except one derelict and one that is operated a few months a year by a private syndicate, mainly as a passenger-carrying tourist attraction. The whole town has gone very tourist oriented and sport fishing charters on the lake are much in evidence. It's all very different now.

In the years when I was growing up the town and the surrounding woods, farmland, sand dunes and beaches were our oyster. It was a different time and many of the concerns and fears of today had yet to be dreamed up. We had the run of the town by bicycle, at least when the snow was gone, and safety wasn't much of a concern. Of course my parents fretted over the possibility of drowning or getting flattened by a car (or a locomotive) if we weren't careful, but drugs, abductions and all those modern evils were not on the radar screen in that time and place. Our curfew indicator was the streetlights. Winters were long and hard, but we were young and resilient and really didn't know any better anyway.

The local airport, now KLDM, the Mason County Municipal Airport, had two medium length grass runways (long since paved) and had about the normal amount of activity for a facility of that size at that point in time. My dad was an aviation buff and we seldom took a ride without going by for a look. There was always a fabric covered canary-yellow twin parked there. It had a pair of big radials and two-bladed propellers not much larger than the diameter of the engines. I don't know the type. Years later I saw the hulk of it in a local junkyard, a sad thing.

I attended St. Simon, the local Catholic school all the way through grade school and high school. I was part of the largest graduating class ever

from there, an unruly gang of 49. The record will stand forever as it was never bested and the school was closed several years after our class graduated. Our teachers were largely nuns, the Sisters of Mercy. I've often reflected on how they could have acquired such a misnomer for a title, as mercy did not seem to be amongst their main attributes.

They were, however, very smart women and excellent teachers. Amongst the core crafts they dispensed with a vengeance was writing - phonics, spelling, grammar, syntax, composition and all the rest. Regardless of what else transpired, you were not going to escape from St. Simon without having learned to write reasonably well, or at least having learned to recognize decent writing when you saw it.

My high-school job was with a local ice-cream plant and distributorship, originally the Park Dairy, which later became the more tourist-friendly House of Flavors. Initially I was a helper on a truck route during the summers and did odd jobs in the plant and attached store-front operation after school and on weekends during the school year. That job turned me into a life-long ice cream connoisseur and it remains a weakness.

When I was old enough to get a drivers license I was pressed into service making local deliveries and later longer runs in van and pickup-sized trucks. The opportunity to do all that driving was a teen-age boy's dream in those days, all the more so given my dad's very old-fashioned ideas about the proper relationship between teenagers and automobiles, especially his.

I applied to the Naval Academy at Annapolis while in high school. It was the only college I was interested in. I nearly made it, but not quite. Our congressman had two vacancies to fill that year and he selected six of us, letting the Navy sort out the two who would become Midshipmen. I was one of the six, but not one of the two. It was an early and valuable lesson in the fundamental slipperiness of members of Congress. I wonder sometimes how life might have differed if that had gone the other way.

After spending a school year drifting around in a junior college curriculum, I enlisted in the Navy, entering in June 1966. It was during the time the Vietnam war was ramping up in earnest and seemed like the thing to do. A year or so later, when the televised draft lottery drawings were first held, my birthday was the second date out of the jar. Given that, the military was going to be a part of my life no matter what. I never regretted the decision to enlist and look at my time in the service much as I do high school. It's something I wouldn't have missed for the world, but wouldn't want to do over again either. I'm proud to be a veteran and to have served honorably - at least that's what the discharge papers say.

My Navy time was pretty standard - boot camp at Great Lakes IL in high summer, three months of schooling in San Diego and then the fleet. My rating was Machinery Repairman, which is what the Navy calls a machinist. I was trained to operate lathes, milling machines, shapers and all manner of machine tools. I enjoyed it and seemed to have a reasonable aptitude for it.

I served in two ships, both built in 1944. The first was a repair ship, a floating repair facility for other ships. The other was a destroyer, somewhat dated, but fast and fun. All my Navy time after the San Diego school was on the east coast with home ports in Newport RI and Norfolk VA, but also with a fair amount of sea time and port visits. I spent about five months in the naval shipyard at Portsmouth VA and three fun-filled months in Guantanamo Bay, a place so desolate that even third-world bomb-throwers find it unpleasant.

Much of the time on the destroyer was spent plane-guarding for the USS America off the US east coast. We'd steam a mile or so behind the carrier during flight ops to be available to fish unlucky Naval Aviators out of the drink. It never happened, as the helicopters invariably got there first. Every morning at daybreak we'd steam back about ten miles and have a look at the obligatory Soviet "fishing trawler" bristling with antennas that was dutifully shadowing the carrier. In those

days the carriers were flying A-6 Intruders, F-4 Phantoms, A-4 Skyhawks, RA-5 Vigilantes, F-8 Crusaders, A-7 Corsairs, S-2 Trackers and C-1 Traders. Intruders, pretty much new to the fleet at that time, are what I remember seeing most and they remain a favorite. They're all gone now, except the Prowler electronic warfare version.

I left the Navy as a second class Petty Officer (E-5) in 1970 on a Friday the 13th, an auspicious day for me then and ever since. The Navy and I both got a good deal out of those four years. I didn't regret a day of it, but wouldn't have agreed to stay ten more minutes if they'd made me an admiral. For their part, I gave them no reason to regret having employed my services, but neither were they about to make me an admiral, so we agreed to part.

The immediate post-USN years were spent at a series of maintenance jobs at a couple of foundries and a cannery, a summer back driving the ice-cream trucks again and acquiring a couple of years of pre-engineering credits part-time at a junior college.

In October 1972 I married Pam, whom I'd met years before. That was the smartest thing I ever did and mentioning it here is probably second. I was her blind date for her 16th birthday beach party, a pairing arranged by my cousin. Pam has since forgiven her.

My "career" job began in late 1973 when I went to work for American Electric Power (AEP), a large mid-west electric utility. AEP is predominantly a coal-burning company but owns one two-unit nuclear plant, still under construction at the time I was hired. That plant is the D.C. Cook Nuclear Generating Station in Bridgman, Michigan and it was there I went to work - no dirt-burners for me. Bridgman is about ten miles south of St. Joseph/Benton Harbor, Michigan, where Pam and I had settled after marrying. All that is far south in Michigan, but still on the Lake Michigan shoreline, roughly across the lake from Chicago.

I found a home at Cook Plant, prospering there and ultimately spending over 28 years. I began

as a Maintenance Mechanic and left as an Executive Staff Assistant, whatever the heck that is. I was one and still don't know. Most of my career there was in maintenance and for a time (two separate times) I was Maintenance Department Manager, responsible for all the mechanical, electrical and instrument maintenance in the place. I had an opportunity to see and play with all the toys in a very large and complicated toy box. It was full of interesting and amazing things and I loved it. It was hectic and demanding, but was also a great and satisfying experience. For a five-year stint in the early 90s I was Computer Science Superintendent, a fun job at a fun time. When I stepped into the position Cook had about 10 stand-alone PCs; five years later we had over a thousand networked machines.

I'm proud to have been a part of it and am a great proponent of nuclear power. Notable things I remember...

* I was the crane operator when we unloaded the first load of nuclear fuel from the trucks for the first Cook Unit 1 core in 1975.

* Cook was the first nuclear site to generate 100 billion KWh of electric power.

* For many years Cook 1 was the most productive reactor in commercial service of over a hundred being operated in the US.

* We were the first Ice Condenser containment to go into service, with a few million pounds of borax-laden ice stored in a special refrigerated compartment inside the containment. The purpose was to quickly condense steam in the event of an accident, limiting the pressure spike and protecting the containment building from failure. Only about a dozen were built that way, a fundamentally bad idea that worked, but was extremely maintenance intensive.

During my time working for AEP several notable events occurred in my life.

In 1980 I learned to fly, joining a local club that owned a C-152, a C-172 and a Grumman AA5 Tiger. I earned my Private Pilot License and flew for a couple of years. I had some adven-

tures and experiences during that time, including returning in a Greyhound bus on two separate occasions. (Those are stories for another time.) I was about to begin training for an instrument rating when President Reagan fired the air traffic controllers. The system went into cardiac arrest and remained in intensive care for many months. It didn't seem a particularly good time to be blundering around in an instrument environment as a student and I delayed it. By the time things returned to normal, the next major event in my life had occurred and I elected to stop real-world flying altogether.

In 1982 our daughter Renee arrived, adopted by us in May of that year at the tender age of about six weeks. Between work and an expanded family there didn't seem to be much opportunity or money left over for flying. I firmly believe that real world flying is one of those things that cannot be done safely on a shoestring. If one can't do it enough to be sharp, it's not wise to be doing it at all. Renee was a blessing and I wouldn't trade her for all the flight hours in the world.

In 1987 I was given the opportunity to go back to college full time and finish my engineering degree. I had already served for a few years in a position at Cook that really should have required one; at some point senior management decided to set things right. I was replaced and sent to school for two years, full time at full salary and with all the school expenses paid. Not many people get that kind of opportunity and you just can't say no to an offer like that. In December of 1989 I received my Bachelor of Science in Engineering (Industrial) from Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo MI. Before you ask, yes, there really is a Kalamazoo in Michigan.

I retired from AEP in 2002 about midway between my 55th and 56th birthdays. We moved to Ocala about a year later, purchasing three acres west of town. Besides the house, our property has a large barn/shop with a guest apartment above. We enjoy the place, but 200+ trees create a lot of work and sometimes it's a struggle to keep up. We arrived just in time for the Welcome to Florida Hurricane Festival of 2004. None

the less, we enjoy living in Florida very much and haven't considered moving back north for a milli-second.

I contracted myself back to Cook for project management work for four or five refueling outages after retiring, but soon tired of that. It meant being away from home for seven or eight weeks at a time a couple of times a year. After we moved to Florida that was no fun, so I left that behind too.

Since that time I've kept myself pretty busy with flight simulation in general and with OFSC. I was blissfully unaware the club even existed until I encountered Chan Gerber one day, holding court in the KOCF terminal for some kids who were there to see the visiting war birds. I became a member soon after.

I've done some aviation based writing including a couple of fictional short stories, reviews and how-to articles, mostly published at the UK-based Mutley's Hangar website where I'm a co-administrator. I've done some beta testing for various FS-related software add-ons. Most recently I've been very involved as an alpha tester for AirHauler, a freight flying FS add-on that's in beta testing now and will be released for sale in December.

I began with Flight Simulator when it was a Sublogic product in the mid-80s. My platform was the Commodore 64 with a 4-color monitor; I don't even remember a joystick, just the keyboard. There were about a dozen airports altogether and the only one I recall with an ILS was at Kankakee, IL. I've owned and used every version of FS since then, though have balked a little at FSX. I own it but prefer FS9.

My flight sim preferences are pretty much anything with propellers that can carry freight - radials engines or turbo-props preferred. I'm hooked on the freight-flying add-ons, Cargo Pilot at first and now AirHauler. My favorites are...

- * Payware AC
- * Captain Sim C-130E Hercules,
- * FSD Piaggio P-180 Avanti

- * Flight1 Pilatus PC-12
- * DH-8 Q300
- * Freeware AC
- * Fairchild C-123K Provider
- * Fairchild C-119C Flying Boxcar
- * Default AC
- * Cessna 172 Skyhawk
- * Cessna 182 Skylane
- * Cessna 208 Grand Caravan
- * Hardware
- * CH Yoke and Pedals
- * Butt-kicker Chair-shaker
- * Nostramo n52 Gamepad
- * Add-Ons
- * AirHauler (cargo flying)
- * FS Navigator (flight planning, moving map, FMS)
- * Just Flight Traffic 2005 (including Plus Paks for commuters, military 1 and 2)
- * Active Sky (weather)
- * Radar Contact (ATC)
- * FSGenesis (terrain mesh)
- * Ultimate Terrain (terrain, roads, etc)
- * Real Environment (terrain enhancement, water textures, night lighting, etc)

I almost always fly IFR and use Active Sky real-world weather, choosing the airways or VOR to VOR routing. I like Radar Contact for ATC very much, though have shelved it lately while testing AirHauler. I'll be dragging it out again soon.

Our first grandchild, Riley, was born in March of this year and Pam and I are enjoying our new-found grandparenthood immensely. Riley's dad is an Air Force career guy, and is stationed at Pope AFB in Fayetteville NC, some 500 miles up the long, long road. We'll be making the trip of-ten.

Guru List

Wayne Knowles

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General Flight Sim questions;GPS; FS9; FSX; some hardware /display; all with reference to XP.

Chan Gerber

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General Flight Sim questions;GPS; FS9; FSX; some hardware /display; all with reference to Vista; Computer add-ons = Butt Kicker, TrackIR4.

Jim Dillman

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Basic computer questions; software applications; upgrades.

Dave Jones

davjones@atlantic.net

AI traffic; ATC; repainting aircraft; flying transport type aircraft (B727, B737-200,B757, B767, and MD80);fooling with various .cfg files to achive particular results.

By e-mail only.

John Allard

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General flight sim questions; FS9 and XP; IFR flight; props & turbo props; Just Flight Cargo Pilot; Just Flight Traffic 2005; Radar Contact; AFCAD; Captain C-130; FSD Piaggio P-180; Flight 1 Pilatus PC 12; aircraft.cfg file issues; weight and balance issues; airport diagrams to order (ask me).

By e-mail only.

December Breakfast Get-Together

John Allard

We very nearly didn't have a December breakfast. It was thought that perhaps people would just be too busy with Christmas looming. Our normal date window placed it within a week of the holiday and there was some discussion as to whether we ought to just skip December. Following a little good-natured arm-twisting at the Golden Corral dinner, it was agreed to go ahead with it. Food seems to inspire plans for securing more food.

Thanks to some good information from Jim Dillman, we settled on the newly-opened Flipside Café, which shares the plaza with Barnes & Noble, Petsmart and the old Lowes. After one abortive attempt to get hold of a menu and a reservation because of an improbable 2:00 PM closing time, the manager graciously loaned a menu and wrote us in on second attempt. The menu was duly scanned and distributed with the e-mailed notification package.

Probably due to the proximity to Christmas, there were only eight in attendance this time, including two spouses and member Helen Smith to bridge the gap. (I never know how to count Helen, but she's such a nice lady I'd prefer to count her twice.) That is the lowest number of attendees we've seen so far, but it didn't seem to dampen the good spirits – everyone there seemed to have enjoyed themselves.

The food was excellent and the staff was helpful and friendly. They had already pushed tables together for us before our arrival, however that seems to have disrupted their normal traffic pattern. Our waiter must have banged his forehead on a suspended light fixture next to the tables a half-dozen times. Incredibly, he remained pleasant throughout. Presumably, one of our tables normally resides directly under the offending light.

A sort of impromptu secondary gathering occurred immediately following breakfast at the bookstore next door. Several of us took the opportunity to see if the latest (and long overdue) issue of PC Pilot was on the shelf – alas, it was not. That sour note notwithstanding, we had a great time and are looking forward to our January breakfast. Join us if you can. Details will be e-mailed at least a week in advance of the date.

December Dinner/Meeting at Golden Corral

John Allard

Our normal monthly meeting on December 3rd was a little bit abnormal, but in the positive sense. Our usual gathering place was unavailable to us for reasons unknown. Presumably Landmark had a higher priority need for their conference room and it is, after all, theirs. In an attempt to make something novel and attractive of the situation, it was decided to meet for dinner in lieu of the regular meeting.

A good portion of our membership gathered at the appointed place and time – at the Golden Corral buffet restaurant. With all the coming and going from the buffet tables it was a little difficult to get an accurate head count but I believe there were sixteen of us. That constitutes an excellent turnout for our club – I believe it's been quite a long time since we've had so many at a meeting - nor have any of our monthly breakfasts, as popular as those have been, approached that number.

Among the attendees was a prospective new member who was, I believe, recruited by Chan Gerber. Faced with all that good food and all those friends to rub elbows with, I failed to get his name. Presumably we did not scare him off and we are hopeful that he will attend the January meeting where we'll all learn his name again.

The spouses were very well represented this time around, another plus, as we've learned from the breakfast meetings. We've never failed to have at least two of the wives at those gatherings and usually more. As always the ladies are most welcome at any of these gatherings, including at our regular meetings.

Golden Corral puts on a good spread. Speaking of spreading, one less trip to the desert table for me might have been a good idea. Though we weren't able to reserve it ahead of time due to insufficient numbers, (they require thirty) by luck their semi-private room was available to us and it worked out well, despite an impromptu game of musical chairs at the beginning. I didn't notice anyone having to stand while eating, so I guess everyone won.

This turned out to be a good way to kick off Christmas holiday season and the dinner was judged enjoyable and successful by everyone I talked to. Perhaps we should consider doing this each year for our December meeting – it seemed to work.

