The Cessna 150-152 Club

How to Fly to Clinton

2007 Edition

www.cessna150152.com

The Well Prepared Cessna 150-152 Pilot's Guide to Flying to Clinton, Iowa from Anywhere in North America.

Chapter One
Baby Steps to Clinton 2007

Let's start by admitting up front that for most of us, flying to Clinton, Iowa from wherever we live is a big, big deal. The average distance flown to Clinton in 2006 was a whopping 727 miles. To get this kind of average, a whole bunch of pilots flew much much further. Those coming from the left coast flew more than 1,600 miles. Florida pilots flew more than 1,300 miles each, and those from the East Coast typically covered 800 miles or more. 98 airplanes made the pilgrimage last year.

You might ask yourself, *"Self, why go to Iowa, can't the club have a fly-in closer to where I live?"* Good question! We're glad you asked. The truth is, we'd love to have well attended fly-ins all over North America, and maybe someday we will, it's been suggested for instance that we move the club International fly-in around the country on a rotating basis.

The reason we have not done this so far is two fold. First, it takes a tremendous amount of resources to host an International fly-in. 100+ people must be fed, housed and entertained for 2-4 days. But more importantly, we need the complete cooperation of the host airport. The airport management in Clinton allows us to literally take over the airport for most of a week each summer. We know we can find this cooperation elsewhere too, but it's taken us several years to get everything "wired" at Clinton, and we're not anxious to start over with a whole new set of unknowns. The fact that Oshkosh is just two hours away and starts the day after is just icing on the cake. We figure, if you're going to come this far, you might just want to go to Oshkosh too. *(About a dozen pilots go on to Osh each year.)*

So, though we'd like to promise that we'll be able to sponsor a club fly-in nearer your home airport someday, it will likely be several years down the road. Do you really want to wait that long? The fact is, the Clinton fly-in is a sort of incubator for friendships and future regional club fly-ins. There have been more grassroots regional fly-ins by club members since Clinton '06 than in any year in the club's 27 year history.

Ironically, if you're anxious for more contact with club members in your area, the best thing you can do is get infected by the Clinton bug. We call it *"ClintonMania"* for a reason. It takes a special sort of enthusiasm and devotion to get to Clinton, it's literally the top 10% of really excited and active club members who come to Clinton

Budget

Can you afford this? The short answer is probably not, but the longer answer is, can you afford not to? Quite a few club members come every year, and they are quick to admit that it's a tough trip to budget for. In the next breath they're quick to point out that *"I wouldn't miss it for the world!"* More telling is their behavior afterwards, it's common for Clintonites to schedule their future vacations a year in advance around the fly-in.

First and foremost, you need to figure out how much time you have available. Some Clintonites spend 2-3 days enroute, and 4 or more days at the fly-in, easily consuming a week or more. This is obviously a pretty big time commitment. Other Clintonites arrive Friday night, or even Saturday morning, and return home Sunday morning, this is doable without wearing yourself out if home is within 500 miles.

Ok, you've got my curiosity, but what's it gonna cost? Well, if you insist on being practical about this thing, let's run some numbers. First, you can get a quick idea about the distance from home on the club website, we have an gps direct calculator that will quickly tell you the distance to Clinton from your home town. Once you have that in hand, you can budget for your fuel, lodging, and meals.

As a rule of thumb, we recommend you cover no more than 600 miles a day. Plenty of pilots tackle more than that. Jeff Hersom once flew all day and into the night to cover 1,300+ miles in a day, and still had the energy to skateboard around the airport in the morning. If this appeals to you...well, go right ahead if you have Jeff's youthful energy, but honestly, 6-7 hours a day in a 150-152 is plenty, and you'll enjoy the flying more if you set a 600 mile a day limit.

Your biggest cost will be fuel, followed by lodging, and then food. For the purposes of budgeting, figure you'll get about 18 miles per gallon. Use the following formula: (Distance/18)*Cost per gallon. So for example, if you live 1,200 miles from Clinton, your budget might look something like this:

1. Distance round trip: 2,400 miles, divided by 18 miles per gallon equals 133 gallons of fuel, times $3.15 per gallon *(April 2007 price @ Clinton)*. Total cost for fuel: $418.

2. Time enroute round trip: *(assuming 600 miles per day)* 4 days. You can typically find Motel lodging enroute for about $60-$70 per night. Add another $20-$40 per person per day for meals, and in this

example your cost of enroute travel is about $400.

3. Motels in Clinton are a little more expensive than average, plan on $60-$90 per day, so you can save considerably by camping at the airport. For the sake of argument, let's assume you stay at a $75 per night motel, add another $20-$40 per person per day for meals, and $60 for the fly-in registration fee. If your coming solo, and staying for 3 days, your time in Clinton will likely cost you about $350 or so.

Ready for a total? In our hypothetical example, the total cost of attending the fly-in from 1,200 miles away is about $1,200, or 50 cents per mile round trip, which is a quick shortcut to working this out. It sounds like a lot, but keep in mind in our example this works out to a weeks vacation, with flying every day, at a total cost of about $170 per day. You can't go to Disneyworld or Vegas for that.

If you're a real spendthrift, you can easily get by for a lot less, and the closer you live the cheaper it gets. Say you live 600 miles away for example. You can make the flight each way in a day, so no motel costs, and if you pack enroute meals and camp at the airport, the total cost of attending the fly-in could be as low as about $200 for fuel, and say $30 per person per day for meals, plus fly-in registration, for a 4-5 day total of about $350. Less than $100 per day, not bad at all.

Your mileage may vary.

The above might seem like a strange way to entice you to attend the Clinton fly-in, almost sabotage if you share the figures with your significant other, but seriously, in spite of the budget demands, when it comes down to motivation, this thing is not about the money.

Coming to Clinton is a very personal thing, a sort of pilgrimage of the faithful. Yes, of course it's about flying, but more importantly, it's about connecting with friends who are as uncommonly devoted to flying as you are.

Enroute to Clinton you'll likely encounter folks at FBO's who are amazed to hear you are taking your 150-152 to Iowa from a good distance away. These people just don't get that it's as much about the journey as it is about the destination.

Another choice to make is whether you want to do this alone, with a co-pilot, or best of all, travel to Clinton in a caravan. Caravans are uniquely fun, but of course you have to plan your schedule around the caravan, though there's no requirement to caravan round trip. If you can possibly fit it in, we recommend caravanning. See the club website for lists of groups going to Clinton.

More practical stuff:

After making this trip from California to Clinton 5 times now, we can make several logical recommendations:
Use a GPS, one with an airport database. You're going to have to be especially diligent about flying in unfamiliar areas, making sure to avoid restricted flying space, and trying to find airports you've never been to before. A GPS will also tell you how much longer it will take to get to the destination with the current winds, invaluable help for fuel planning.

Use a pilot airport guidebook, one that you are familiar with, we like the little brown "Pilot Flight Guides". These books list really important stuff like runway numbers, frequencies, pattern altitudes, and phone numbers for FBO's, restaurants and taxis.

Plan to fly as early in the day as possible. Sunrise is ideal, but no later than 8 am. Why? If you leave later, say 10 am, and fly 600 miles, you're still flying late into the day, maybe after dark, and dealing with the famous Mid Western afternoon thunderstorms. You might have to sit out the weather, and arriving at an unfamiliar destination after dark is no fun at all. The FBO's in most small towns close up after dark, so you won't be able to buy fuel or get a ride to a motel without considerable hassle. If you start early in the day, you'll likely wrap up your flying by mid afternoon, before the weather gets rocky, and it's much easier to get a motel and a ride at 4 pm than at 8 pm. The later in the evening you arrive the worse, if, for example, you don't get settled into your lodging until 10 pm you may have trouble finding an open restaurant in many small towns.

Speaking of meals, enroute food is often tough to come by. Most small airports don't have food on the field, and many don't even have a vending machine. If you don't have food with you, you're left to find transportation to and from town and navigate your way to an unfamiliar restaurant. In the abstract, this is OK, you get a chance to sample some of the local color. but unless you have an open timeframe and schedule, you will burn up a tremendous amount of time getting fed, and might blow your budget to boot. We recommend you carry a small Igloo type cooler with ice and nutri-

(Continued on page 4)

tious snacks, and save your "real" meal for the evening when you're done flying for the day. This is another reason to wrap up your flying early enough in the day to have a choice of restaurants.

When it comes to enroute snacks there are some good choices, and some fairly lousy ones.

Chips, nuts, trail mix and the like can be problematic, they spill easily and make a mess all over the airplane. Likewise cookies, crackers or crumbly foods. The last thing you want is to be searching the floorboards for chunks of chocolate chip granola while you try to maintain altitude. Some granola bars are good if they stick together well enough, we recommend you "flight test" different items in the car first to see which ones are easy to open and won't make a mess. Other good choices are things like string cheese and carrot sticks. Avoid chocolate bars and the like if you can, or you will likely have a melty mess in the cabin sooner or later. We've discovered that snack pack pudding or single serving applesauce are surprisingly satisfying, and not really messy if you remember a plastic spoon.

Things like beef sticks or jerky seem like a good choice, but we've found them unsuitable. First, these kinds of products leave a nasty coating in your mouth, one that beverages won't wash away, and you are not likely to be brushing your teeth anytime soon. Jerky has a habit of getting stuck between your teeth, a distraction at best, darn annoying when it happens, and just try and find a toothpick! Worst of all, if you get tired of chewing beef jerky and decide to swallow earlier than you should, you risk choking, and there's not much room for self performing the Heimlich in a C150.

One of the most important things you can bring along to accompany your food choices is a roll of paper towels. When you spill some food or beverage there really is no good substitute for a paper towel, so make sure a roll is in the airplane and within easy reach.

Beverages: Bottled water is best, really. If you absolutely must have a soda, make sure it's the kind with a reseal able screw on cap. Cans of soda spill nearly every time, and C150-152's don't have cup holders. If you're like us, you need a coffee pick me up in the afternoon, but we've yet to find a thermos that works well in the airplane. Just try pouring hot coffee out of the thermos into that little lid / cup thing once in turbulence and you'll get a free lap warming. *(Hey! Maybe we could sue McDonalds!)*

We've found two functional ways to deal with our afternoon caffeine Jones. The first is to pack cold coffee drinks with resealable lids, and the second, good old No-Doze type caffeine tablets. If you go this route you'll be especially happy you packed bottled water, chunking these babies down dry is particularly distasteful.

Ok, so we've covered time of day, and what to eat enroute, now we come to the most important issue of all:

FUEL PLANNING:

Yes friends, that's capitalized on purpose. There are several big issues here, let's run them down in order.

1. Standard tanks? Plan to fly a VFR maximum of 2.75 hours tach time between fuel stops. Fill the tanks, and do the math before you depart. We actually write down the tach time when we need to be back on the ground on a post it and stick it to the face of the tach, that way there's no question. If you have long range tanks, you can extend your VFR time to 4.5 tach hours if you want to, but that's an awful long time to sit still. For your own comfort and sanity we recommend 3 hour flight legs max.

2. Make sure where you are landing next has fuel on the field, and that the fuel will be available when you arrive. Self serve pumps are best, but fewer than half the airports have them. Don't rely on a pilot's guide for fuel availability, call ahead on the phone before you depart, and make sure you will be able to get fuel at that stop. This is another reason to travel early in the day, it's common for small FBO's to be unattended by late afternoon, leaving you stranded. If there's no self service fuel at the last stop of the day, then fill up when you arrive or you'll be delayed on your departure the next morning waiting for the FBO to open. If you do this, be sure to dip your tanks before departure, it's common to lose some fuel through the vent over night.

3. Small, out of the way airports will likely have cheaper fuel, but these same airports rarely have self service pumps, and the FBO's are often unattended. Again, call ahead, get the fuel price and availability, and don't forget to ask what time they close up for the day.

4. Use TCP fuel additive to prevent valve sticking. If you get a stuck valve enroute it may be very difficult to find a mechanic around. A single quart container of TCP will be plenty for your entire Clinton trip.

In Chapter 2 we cover choosing, weighing and packing stuff to take along.

Chapter Two
Packing Your Stuff in 8 Sq Feet

A couple of assumptions up front. Last year the average club pilot who came to Clinton flew more than 600 miles to get there, many over 1,000. If your point of departure is 300 nm from Clinton or more, you can't get there without at least one fuel stop. We'll assume this applies to the reader, though the advice offered here will apply to anyone who is camping or bringing more than a 10 lb gym bag for luggage.

Secondly, as you see in the subtitle, we assume you'll have 8 sq feet of luggage space to work with. Airplanes prior to the 1966 150F have less than half that much room, 1959 models only about 25%. If you fly one of the 1965 or earlier airplanes, you'll have to take our observations with a grain of salt, you simply will have to pack smarter and better, if anything, our packing advice will be more useful to you than the pilots with a full 8 sq feet of room.

Secondly, we'll assume you have around 300 lbs of "useful load" This means that you have room for about 300lbs of people and stuff with full standard (26 gallon) fuel tanks.

Take a look at your weight and balance calcs. Here are the boilerplate targets:

Airplanes with a 1,500 lb gross should weigh no more than 1,054 lbs empty.

1,600 lb gross, 1,154 lbs empty.

1,650 lb gross (early model 150 ACT conversions) 1,204 lbs empty.

1,670 lb gross (152's) 1,224 lbs empty.

1,760 lb gross (late model 150 ACT conversions) 1,314 lbs empty.

1,837 lb gross (152 ACT conversions) 1,391 lbs empty.

Don't fret if your airplane falls short of these goals, but if that's the case, be ready to pack lighter and smarter than average.

For the sake of simplicity, for the remainder of this article we will assume 300 lbs of useful load with full tanks, adjust your own calculations accordingly.

Next comes two fairly crucial questions. #1. Will you be traveling with a passenger? If so, be prepared for some extreme compromises. For the sake of argument let's say you weigh a perfect FAA 170 lbs, and your passenger weighs 130 lbs. Guess what? You have a zero weight allowance for stuff. That's zilch, zero, nada, not even an allowance for a spare quart of oil.

Let's face it, most club pilots and passengers weigh more than the above example. We know this means that when carrying a passenger the C150-152 gross weight limits are routinely violated, it's nearly impossible not to do so.

Our purpose here is not to scold or warn about the potential serious legal consequences of busting the regs. Instead, we will focus our attention on safety. If you are the typical C150 pilot you've had occasion to depart over gross, and realized that the airplane still climbs out, though sluggish.

Our advice: If you are determined to depart over gross, calculate your climb performance from the POH very carefully, and pad the expected takeoff distance by a minimum of 25%. DO NOT forget to account for density altitude, and pay special attention to any potential obstacles or rising terrain.

Logically, *(and legally)* your better choice is to reduce the load as much as possible, by carrying less fuel and the absolute minimum of necessities for baggage. If density altitude is a factor, your best plan of action is to leave at first light, when temperatures are cooler. If you have a choice of acceptable runways for prevailing conditions, always choose the longest one possible.

That said, what follows will apply to flights with passengers to an even greater degree than solo pilots.

Question #2, solo pilot weight. There's not a whole heck of a lot you can do about this one, except that since you're reading this a couple of months in advance you might undertake a weight loss regime. Let's say for example that you weigh an even 200 lbs. In that case you have room for 100 lbs of "stuff", more than sufficient in our view. *(We'll prove it in a moment.)*

So, let's get started shall we?
Strategies: We'll start by dividing our luggage into four key categories as follows: Flight Bag, Plane Supplies, Personal stuff, Camping supplies. The first three of these apply to all pilots, The last to campers only.

Basic rule for all categories: COMPARTMENTALIZE. A big word, but a very basic concept. Divide your stuff up according to use. For example, rather than use a big suitcase or duffle bag for all your personal stuff, divide your stuff up into 3 or 4 smaller bags. Like this:

Packing Your Stuff in 8 Sq Feet *(Continued from page 5)*

You need clean clothes obviously, but you don't need all your clothes at once, only one change at a time. Here is the concept: Use a lightweight backpack to carry a change of clothes, and your toiletry kit, plus anything else you feel is a necessity for overnight stops. Divide the remainder of your clothes into two medium size duffle bags, one for clean, the other for dirty. Each morning when you return to the airplane you'll unpack your dirty clothes from the backpack into the dirty duffle, and pack a fresh change of clothes into the backpack for the next overnight stop. When you're done flying for the day, your overnight backpack is all ready, just grab it and go. Believe me, if you've been flying all day long, and arrive after dark, the last thing you want to do is dig through your luggage or tote several bags to the motel.

If using the above method, you can greatly simplify the process by choosing soft sided luggage in a variety of colors. We like the 20" to 24" duffle bags you can buy at Target, Kmart or Wal-Mart, they're cheap, durable, lightweight, and available in a wide variety of colors. It is simply faster and easier to have a different color bag for each purpose, especially if flying with a passenger. "Can you grab me the green duffle, please" is a better plan than "Hey, see if you can find the fresh batteries, I think they're in my suitcase."

Another excellent lightweight and cheap type of luggage are soft sided insulated coolers. These coolers are available at any of the above retailers, they come in all sorts of sizes and colors, usually cost under $20, and are the perfect shape to hold lots of stuff. Best of all, they are insulated, making them excellent for packing things like cameras, GPS units, and snacks. The insulation keeps these items from getting too hot, and provide some shock protection when things get tossed around in back. We usually have several of these insulated coolers in the airplane, color coded according to their purpose. One cooler is for snacks *(added benefit, it can hold ice if needed to keep beverages cool),* another for our collection of GPS's, batteries, and flashlights, another for our digital and video cameras.

Flight Bag: When is the last time you went through your whole flight bag and organized everything? Have a E6B in there? Ever use it anymore? Got a bunch of out of date charts in there? Dead batteries? Time to go through that baby and make sure it only contains stuff you'll need. Here's what we carry: Our headsets, flight guides, charts, spare batteries, a basic backup GPS, a few pens, some Postit tags, and a handheld radio. That's it. And it all fits into a medium size soft sided flight bag.

Plane Supplies: There are a lot of opinions about what you should carry for servicing the airplane, and each pilot has an individualized list of "needs". Here's what we carry: Two quarts of Aeroshell Oil, an oil spout, a few heavy duty Ziploc freezer bags *(keeps oily stuff like the spout from messing up everything else in there),* a container of Plexiglas window cleaner, a roll of blue "Shop" paper towels. A few microfiber window cleaning cloths, and quart size container of TCP fuel additive.

Everything Needed in One Hand. Fresh AA and 9 volt Batteries, Spare Fuses and Airframe Screws. This Perfectly Proportioned Parts Bin Costs Just $5 at Wal-Mart. *(Sheet Metal Screw Assortment in the Tool Dept.)*

What about tools? We carry a Swiss army knife *(a Leatherman tool would be as good or better)* ours includes Phillips and regular screwdrivers, a rudimentary pliers, and scissors. That's it. No socket or crescent wrenches, no safety wire etc. Why? We figure if anything breaks that can't be fixed with the Swiss army knife, we'll probably require the services of a mechanic, and they'll have the necessary tools. Opinions vary widely on this topic, some pilots carry a full tool kit, but tools are heavy. We used to carry lots of tools too, but after going to Clinton from California six times, we've concluded that this is an area where we can save a lot of weight. In six roundtrips, the most we've ever needed tool wise was a Phillips screwdriver, and our Swiss Army knife has one.

Spare Parts? We carry a small container with airframe screws, and spare fuses. In our view, these are the most likely items to require replacement. Again, in six roundtrips *(over 25,000 nautical miles!)* we've never been stranded by not having spare parts in the airplane.

Personal Stuff: Obviously this category varies widely by individual, but here's what I *(Royson)* personally pack.

Clothing bag: One pair jeans to wear, one spare, one pair tennis shoes to wear, one spare pair, enough shirts, socks and underwear for the number of expected days between

laundry runs, and a swimsuit. For a two week trip, I can fit all the above in a single 24" duffle, and most important, it weighs less than 10 lbs!

Electronics bag: Cell phone charger, digital camera charger, camcorder and charger, laptop and charger, Misc cables for connecting to the internet etc. All this stuff fits into a single soft sided cooler, and with a combined weight of about 15 lbs.

Backpack: As earlier described, this contains everything needed for an overnight stop. In my case, a spare pair of glasses and sunglasses, a single change of clothes, a small shave/toiletry kit, cell phone, digital camera, and occasionally the laptop computer.

Snack Pack: An insulated cooler, with an assortment of a in flight snacks (*see ideas in chapter 1)* a couple of bottles of drinking water, and ice if available. All this personal stuff combined weighs less than 30 lbs.

Compartmentalization: There's that word again! We found the absolute perfect container for all our plane supplies at Wal-Mart. It's a Rubbermaid portable file tote. The size is just 17" x 7"x 11". This tote allows our oil and TCP quarts to be stored upright, and has room for all our plane stuff in a very small and handy footprint. It's leak proof *(We once used our Rubbermaid tote to transfer fuel from one plane to another)* with a handle on top, making it very easy to get in and out of the baggage area. Best of all, our Rubbermaid tote costs just $10 *(Part# E15462RB in the office supplies aisle.)*

Camping Supplies: This is the category with the greatest potential for weight, but one you must address if camping at Clinton and/or enroute.

Things like tents and sleeping bags encompass a wide range of qualities and weights.

Tents: We determined that 2-3 man tents were the appropriate size and weight for our purpose, but were amazed to find such a wide range of weights. The lightest tent found weighed just 7 lbs, the heaviest, over 16! We ultimately settled on a nicely packaged 3 man tent that weighs 11 lbs. Likewise for sleeping bags, the lightest, about 4 lbs, the heaviest over 8. We also weighed a selection of portable/beach chairs and found weights between 4 and 10 lbs. It's easy to get carried away with camping stuff, but do you really need a lantern, cook stove, or inflatable mattress? Given our weight limitations, we say no.

When it comes to some optional camping items, one strategy is to simply purchase them at Target or Wal-Mart in Clinton. For example, beach chairs can typically be had for under $10, and heavy "D" cell batteries for a camping lantern can be purchased at Clinton and then discarded upon departure. Another option for camping supplies is to pack everything up and send it to the Clinton Airport via UPS. If you decide to do this, be sure to give yourself a week's lead time.

We purchased a portable digital fishing scale to weigh various camping items in the store prior to purchase. Note that the small carryon suitcase in the left picture weighs 6.13 lbs empty. The collapsible duffle bag on the right weighs just 1.13 lbs. Both bags have about the same amount of interior room.

As a final step, gather together all your stuff in one place and weigh it. You'll probably be surprised at how much space and weight it all adds up to. Still, if you're traveling solo, it should be a manageable load. If traveling with a passenger, you'll need to compromise somewhat, and be sure to explain the packing "rules" to your companion. Given our 300 lb useful load target, you'll probably find that 10-15 lbs each is about the maximum allowed.

Don't wait till the day you depart to test pack either, we recommend a full test pack at the airplane at least a week in advance. *(still time for UPS)* Include your passenger in this process, so they get the message that you're just being pragmatic. Most passengers are pretty cooperative once they understand safety/performance issues involved.

Chapter Three
The Fine Art of Caravanning

In Europe, Caravan is another word for "trailer" or what Americans like to call an "RV". In this case, it refers to something quite different, namely, a "caravan" flight is our moniker for a sort of traveling flight formation, what we might otherwise call a "convoy" if that term hadn't been so thoroughly maimed by C. W. McCall in the 1975 CB Hit...

'Cause we got a little convoy Rockin' through the night. Yeah, we got a little convoy, Ain't she a beautiful sight? Come on and join our convoy Ain't nothin' gonna get in our way. We gonna roll this truckin' convoy 'Cross the U-S-A….CONVOY !

With apologies to McCall, we'd rather use the "g" key a little more often and the apostrophe key a little less, so we're going to have to use caravan instead of convoy, but the basic concept is the same.

Flying in groups is nothing new of course, though it is commonly thought of a "formation" flying. You may have occasionally heard other airplanes reporting to ATC that they are a "flight of four" or the like. Formation flying is not for the faint of heart nor the untrained, it remains quite hazardous to fly in close proximity to other airplanes, but that is not what we are talking about here.

For one thing, flying very close to other airplanes and maintaining a precise separation from them requires intense concentration. To fly that way for several hours is exhausting work, not the sort of thing you want to do for a whole day or more flying to Clinton.

A caravan, as we define it, is a much looser arrangement, with separation between airplanes in the neighborhood of 100 yards instead of the 23-30 feet that you would see in a real formation flight. While this still requires more concentration than flying by yourself, club members who have flown in caravans in the past report that it is more exhilarating than exhausting.

The main reason that many club members are so enthusiastic about caravanning to Clinton is that flying in a caravan is just plain FUN.

It is simply more entertaining to travel with other airplanes, and share the experience of a cross country trip. Instead of just droning along, hour after hour by yourself, you have other airplanes to watch and talk to. Fuel and overnight stops are occasion for socializing and general frivolity.

Here's an example, told by Jeff Davis, from a 2001 west coast caravan to Clinton. *(note that the participants followed the custom of referring to each other by squadron "handles".)*

"Evanston, WY is a great little airport. Star West

Aviation provided us with a crew car that was so hopelessly decrepit that we immediately adopted it as the official mascot of our ragtag Airforce. The 4 door sedan had what Tex optimistically described as "ejection seats", and the front bumper was held in place with bailing wire. In spite of appearances it efficiently took us into town to look for the cheapest motel we could find.

I was our custom cruiser's designated driver, with Roadrunner occupying the copilot seat, and Tex and Kojak in the jump seats. As we pulled into each motel parking lot, one of the backseat guys would jump out and charge inside for lodging details. On one particular foray, Tex was a bit quick on the door latch just as I spotted a convenient parking spot immediately to our right. A combination of my sharp turn and Tex's open door, nearly succeeded in launching Jerry half-way across the parking lot... and the auspicious notoriety of becoming our fist casualty of the trip.

After this, my driving received a suitable amount of criticism, yet they always made me drive. Go figure! "

These kinds of experiences are not only humorous, they build bonds, forming friendships through shared experience, and shortening the long journey.

Practical Advantages

Besides the fun of traveling in a caravan, there is additional safety in traveling with a group. Every caravan has an experienced "Squadron Leader" who will handle the navigation and communication needs of the caravan. This makes the trip less stressful for the other participants. As a caravaner you won't need to file flight plans, navigate, or keep in touch with ATC, all this is handled by the squadron leader. When traveling through busy controlled airspace you have the security of knowing that ATC is giving some priority to flight following your caravan.. It's a rare event when a *"flight of five"* (or more or less) Cessna 150-152's passes through controlled airspace, and you'll be surprised at the level of cooperation and respect provided by ATC. And, If you should experience mechanical trouble enroute, you'll have the security of extra minds and eyes to help you troubleshoot the problem, find a safe landing spot, and guide rescue to your location.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: I've never flown in formation, do I need special training or permission to join a caravan?

A: Real formation flying requires special training, and it would be quite exhausting to maintain a close formation flight for hours on end cross country. Our caravan flights are not genuine formation flights, spacing between airplanes is very loose, typically 100-200 yards. This does require more attention than flying alone, but it does not require special training or permission. Pilots who are new to caravanning report that they become comfortable traveling this close to other airplanes within the first couple of hours.

Q: How are takeoffs and landings handled?

A: The key to caravanning is to keep visual contact with your "wingman". When taking off, this means you keep your eye on the one single airplane in front, and begin your takeoff roll when that airplane rotates. During the flight the caravan spreads out in a sort of loose "Delta" arrangement, with each airplane maintaining an even distance from their wingman. In this arrangement, all airplanes are naturally separated.

Landings are handled this way: Each airplane in the flight has an assigned landing order. When approaching the pattern for landing, each airplane reduces their speed to the approach speed in reverse order at 30 second intervals. If there are 5 airplanes in the caravan for example, airplane #5 would reduce speed for approach first, then 30 seconds later #4 would reduce speed, followed by #3, #2 & #1, all at 30 second intervals. This naturally spreads out the caravan into a single file line about 1/2 a mile apart, a very natural setup for landing. Once separated into single file, it is very easy to make changes to comply with tower controllers or avoid other traffic in the pattern.

Q: How do I join a caravan *(or start one)* ?

A: The latest 2007 caravan information is posted on the club website at www.cessna150152.com. If you don't use the internet, you can call club headquarters at 805-461-1958 to find out about caravans and arrange to join one. There are usually several Clinton caravans each year, from both coastlines, Florida, Texas, the Midwest and even Canada. It should be quite simple to join up with one of these groups enroute.

In keeping with the fun & frivolity of these plans, caravans are encouraged to come up with whimsical names, here were some of the choices for 2006: Los Vaqueros de Cessnas (Cessna Cowboys), Florida Blowhards, Bold Bubbas, Prairie Oysters, The Flyover Gang, Wayne's World, Ed's Airforce, Ton Up Pirates.

Chapter Four
Charts, Data & Clinton/Oshkosh Arrival Procedures

As we get down to the wire for this year's Clinton and Oshkosh cross countries, it's time to make sure our navigational data is current

There are three areas of concern here. First, to be VFR legal we need current charts in the airplane. The traditional method of getting these can be a fairly expensive proposition. For example, the west coast convoy pilots will require either 10 sectional charts or 6 WAC charts, and an optional 2 terminal area charts. We found the best prices on traditional charts at the AV shop, $7.20 each. Sportys and others charge $8.

If we go with WAC charts, the total cost is about $50 with shipping and tax, but WAC's are drawn to a smaller scale, if you're used to sectionals you will probably be disappointed by the detail in WAC charts.

If we go with the sectionals, the total comes to about $80. Ouch! Worse, these charts will all be out of date by next year, so it's pretty much a one shot deal.

Is there a cheaper way to do this? Yes and No. We found that there are a number of ways to download digital versions of these charts, for example the FAA sells sectionals on their website for just $1.50 each. The problem is, what you end up with is a digital file. Most of us don't have large format color printers available, and even if we did the cost of printing out full charts ourselves would be nearly as expensive as getting the real charts.

The FAA digital sectionals and others can be used on a computer of course, but using a laptop in the cockpit for navigation can be a hassle, and major distraction. If you are computer savvy and have a good color printer, you could digitally cut the digital sectionals into smaller parts that would fit on 8.5 x 11 paper . We've done this in the past, and it works, but frankly, it's a pain in the butt.

Another option is to purchase a WAC or sectional atlas from Air Chart Systems. These books are not cheaper for single use, but $99 per atlas includes updates for an entire year. We've used the Air Chart WAC atlas's in the past, and found them a little confusing to use. On the plus side, the spiral bound atlas is much less awkward than unfolding and folding a sectional in the cockpit, but on the down side, it is a little strange to follow the "continued on Page…." format, as you move across the chart.
Still, we think we could get used to the Atlas with some practice. We used a WAC atlas on a single Clinton cross country a few years ago, part of our level of discomfort was with the unfamiliar WAC format. Since Air chart now has sectional atlas's as well, we are willing to give them another try.

Because the Air Chart Atlas's are good for a whole year, you could conceivably time your purchase so they will still be valid for next year's Clinton/ Oshkosh fly-ins, and in any case, you'll be able to use the atlas for cross country and local flying all during the year.

Second on our list of priorities are airport guides. In our experience, having an airport guide is crucial when landing at unfamiliar airports, especially for fuel and overnight stops. Most pilots are familiar with the FAA Airport/Facility Directories, in the case or the west coast convoy, we would need three separate additions to cover our route, at $4.20 each.

If you are an AOPA member, another option is to use their free airport directory, which is a very through telephone book size guide, a little big for hauling around in your C150-152.

We have become particularly enamored over the years by the Airguide *Flight Guide* series. These are the small guidebooks with the chocolate brown covers. The Flight Guides are very through, and a very handy size for the cockpit, though they necessarily abbreviate a lot of text. Once you get used to the abbreviations, they are a snap to use. There are three editions of the Flight Guide, one for Western , Central and Eastern States. They cost about $40 each, which includes a year's worth of revisions. After the first year, each additional year of revisions is about $26. Not cheap, but in our view, well worth the cost.

Another excellent Airport Guide that we have used in the past are those published by Optima. The Optima guides are a little larger *(about the size of a Franklin Day Planner)*, use larger text, bigger airport drawings, and fewer abbreviations. They are easier to use right out of the box than the smaller

Flight Guides, especially for non pilot companions. Unfortunately, the Optima Pilot's guides do not cover the entire US, but they do offer excellent coverage of the following states: Washington, Oregon, California, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah.

Third, if you navigate by VFR by GPS (which we endorse), we recommend that you update your GPS database annually. For us, it's convenient to time our update for the Clinton trip each year.

Even if you are not concerned about changes to airspace, airports or frequencies *(blasphemy! But after all, if you have current charts and guidebooks you won't need that data.)* We still feel it is crucial to have the latest obstruction database. New radio towers are going up all the time, and in the Midwestern US some of them are very TALL. The GPS has been instrumental in steering us clear of towers in the past, and so we update the obstruction database every year. It just makes good sense.

2007 Clinton Arrival Procedures:

When you arrive will largely determine what you might face with regard to traffic as you approach Clinton. For starters , make note of the following: Runways at Clinton are 21/3 and 32/14. Of these, runway 21 is most commonly in use, left traffic. However, during last year's fly-in conditions shifted enough that all four runways were used at various times, so it is imperative that you be on the frequency early, and ready to alter your plans.

We highly recommend that you talk to Quad Cities approach 125.95 when 20 miles out. Keep in mind that in addition to regular traffic in the area, by Thursday there will be as many as a dozen contest/ pleasure airplanes in the pattern at Clinton during daylight hours.

Clinton Frequencies:

AWOS: 125.525
Regular CTAF: (Always monitored) 122.8
Pilot Controlled Lighting: 118.5
Fly-In Airboss: (Active during the contests) 132.3

The airboss will respond to the radio call sign "Clinton Airboss" or "Clinton FAC" If you fail to raise the airboss on 132.3, try Clinton Unicom anytime on 122.8. Regardless of the day and time you arrive at Clinton, it is imperative that you monitor the frequency early and continuously. During the fly-in there are numerous contest and formation pleasure flights, as well as skydiving drops. Your best source of early information from the South/ West will always be Quad Cities Approach on 125.95, from the North/East, Chicago Center on 118.75.

2006 Oshkosh Arrival Procedures:

Arrival to Oshkosh is quite specific, whether you are going on your own or with club members from Clinton we recommend you read the full Notam published on both the EAA and Cessna 150-152 club website.

In a nutshell, the plan for club pilots going to Oshkosh is to depart Clinton at Midday Sunday. Our route of flight will be Clinton to Dodge County WI, (UNU), a 036 degree heading from CWI and about an hour and 20 minute flight. At UNU we will fuel up, and have a final briefing. From UNU it is just 15 miles to the Ripon checkpoint where we begin the approach procedure to OSH. Important frequencies here are ATIS at 125.9 and Fisk approach at 120.7. Landing at Oshkosh is quite a thrill, and not that difficult if you follow the established procedures, Ripon to Fisk over the railroad tracks at 1,800 MSL 90 knots, then the controllers at Fisk will pass you to the runway controllers who bring you in the rest of the way. *(Read the Notam for complete details.)*

If you've never been to Oshkosh before, the best way is to go and camp with other club members, it makes both the Oshkosh arrival and the show itself less stressful and even more fun.

We'll see You in Clinton...

Contacts

FAA downloads:
www.naco.faa.gov/ecomp/Catalog.aspx?a=AERO+NOS+DIGITAL+DSEC (paste the entire link into your web browser)

Air Chart Systems: www.airchart.com
or 800-338-7721

Optima Pilot Guides: www.pilotsguide.com
or 866-880-4686