
ROTOR GAZETTE

St. Louis Rotorcraft Club ~ PRA Chapter 35 ~ April, 2006

Celebration fly-in to honor "DocFinn"

If ever there was an avid and passionate student and promoter of the gyro sport, Bill Finnegan deserves the title. Bill attended every gyro event possible. He sought every fragment of information on gyro construction, safety, training, and flying in general. His research made many new enduring friendships around the gyro world!

Bill had finally found and purchased his dream project. He was feverishly working to complete a landscaping job at home so he could concentrate on the newly arrived gyro in his garage.

We certainly remember how Bill would dash up to each of us with his beaming smile as we first met at each event - each day - usually to introduce us to a new gyro convert he had just met and made - another enduring friend. Bensen Days was no different, as exuberant as a new pup greeting his master, Bill was the catalyst bringing new friends together with his passion for people and the sport!

At Bensen Days, my personal enduring image of Bill will be him standing out by the flight line all day, filming every gyro and airplane (and bird) that flew by - a rotating crowd of new and old friends visiting Bill at his camera perch to share and record his infectious joy for the happenings around them!

Bill made new endearing friends easily! He knew no stranger! A lady and her husband, sitting several yards from Bill's camera perch on the day before the accident, came up to me on Friday morning to ask if the gentleman

who was in the accident was the wonderful man they had met the day before! We both shared tears as I confirmed her fears! The night before, a large group made the annual evening dinner trek to the "Castle." As usual, Bill was the life of his table and excitedly treated several new friends to his personal tour of the Castle.

Bill's greatest gift to us in life may have been just being a wonderful friend that could light up even a cold, cloudy day. And Bill could ask questions that would be a learning experience to us all. We can only hope that Bill's gift to us in our loss will be lessons learned from this tragedy.

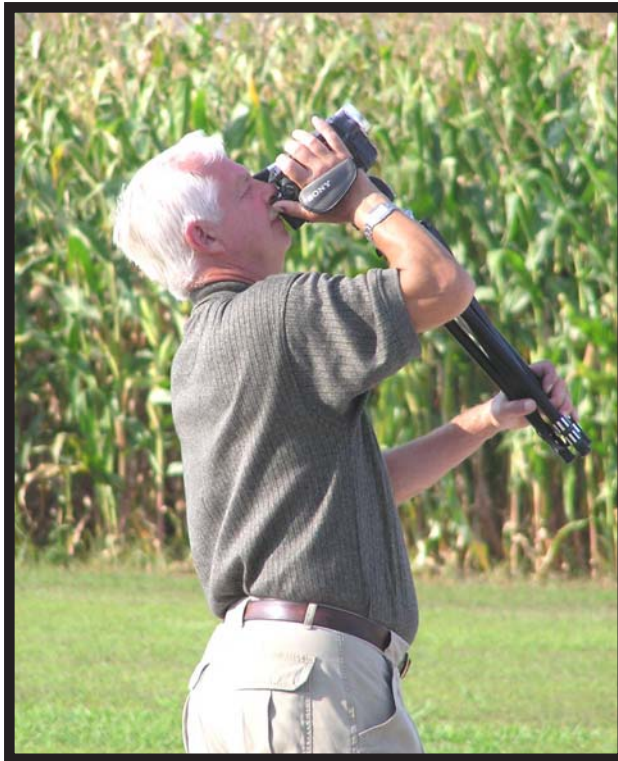
Bill had this wonderful habit of swamping his friends with copies of his flying videos of all the flying events. You could literally re-live every minute of every event Bill filmed. Those videos may now find renewed purpose in our memory of what Bill gave to all of us!

Bill has certainly left his mark on our club, and touched our lives in ways that only he could. His gentle kindness and "joie de vie" will forever be a part of us.

Thanks Bill, for not being a stranger. Thanks Bill for being our friend and stoking the flames of our

shared passion.

Please join our club along with Bill's wonderful wife, Carol, and their family, on Saturday, May 20, 2006 at the Litchfield, Illinois Airport as we honor Bill in a celebration of his passion. Carol has asked us to bring his flying friends together in a "celebration" of Bill's love and passion for his friends and our sport. Bill would want us to be flying and having fun, and that is what we will do in honor of our friend. Share your stories of Bill and most importantly, bring your smiles. That's all he would really want.





St. Louis Rotorcraft Club
c/o Greg Gremming
1725 Pleasant View Drive
Ste. Genevieve, MO 63670

2006 Meeting/Fly-ins Dates

- Saturday, May 6 11:00 AM Greenville, IL airport
- Saturday, May 20 Bill "DocFinn" Finnegan
Celebration Fly-In - Litchfield, Illinois Airport

As you are probably aware, our friend and fellow club member, Bill "Doc" Finnegan ("from Staunton, Illinois"), died in a gyro accident with his friend Terry Eiland on Friday, March 31 at Bensen Days in Florida. Bill had been so looking forward to a morning breakfast gyro flight at Bensen days with his friends. The morning was warm and calm and beautiful. It was on the return from this breakfast that the accident happened. To his closest friends, their last memory of Bill is his signature wide grin, holding his trusty camcorder, strapped in Terry's gyro preparing to leave for breakfast - the breakfast was certainly not the source of his grin!

We probably all remember Bill best as our club's official videographer, always to be found standing by his camera filming everything that flew. Chapter35 will celebrate Bill's passion and love for gyros and his flying friends at a special fly-in at Litchfield airport on May 20. Bill made many friends around the gyro world in his personal quest to learn as much about gyros as he could; and in his search for his perfect gyro project. We are promoting this "celebratory" event to all of Bill's friends around the country, and dedicated to his passion and love for the people and the sport of gyroplanes.


Carol Finnegan and Bill's family asked us if we could hold this special celebration in honor of Bill's passion for the sport, having fun doing what Bill dreamed of and loved to do.

We have met with the Litchfield Airport Authority

(Board of Directors) to coordinate plans for the May 20 Fly-In. The Board is generously supportive of our plans - they feel that is what they are there for - some of them remember Bill from his visits to Litchfield. They will help us arrange the facilities. We expect many of Bill's friends and family to attend - from around the country! At our May 6 meeting at Greenville we will finalize our plans. We are planning to have food catered, but we will be asking our Chapter 35 members to assist with pot luck dishes, etc. Please plan to attend the Greenville meeting so we can assure this "celebration" of our friend will be as meaningful as Bill deserves.

The Fly-in is on Saturday, May 20. The Litchfield Airport Board says camping is available on the grass behind the hangars (along the road). If you would be needing lodging in Litchfield, we recommend making reservations as soon as possible. (There is a convention in Litchfield that weekend also.) Motels available in Litchfield - readily accessible if you are without car:

- Hampton Inn (217) 324-4441
- Holiday Express (217) 324-4556
- Best Value Inn (217) 324-2181



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