

August, 1980 WAMM Mooney Mite Fly-in

During the weekend of August 29, 30 and 31 the WAMM Mooney Mite organization the Mini Mooney Mob held, for the second time, our fly-in and gab-fest at Columbia, California. Columbia is a quaint, restored gold mining town from the 1800's era located in the foothills of the Sierra's with a fine airport within walking distance.

Mite owners arrived from Seattle Washington to the north and San Diego to the south ---- and many points in between.

The attendees this year were Gideon (Gil) Gilbert from Kent, Washington; Tom Clinton from Bellview, Washington (Gil and Tom flew down together from the Seattle area); Bill Vandersande from Camarillo Calif.; Dave Jappay from Orinda, Calif.; "Sandy" Sanderson from Placerville, Calif.; Steve Frenzel and his wife -- who graciously fed us lunch Saturday -- from Los Altos, Calif.; Our intrepid editor Tony Terrigno from Buena Park, Calif.; Gary Gramman and his wife from San Diego, Calif.; and yours truly, Dick McComas from Manhattan Beach, Calif.

Five Mites "bird dogged" their way to the Columbia airport with their owners. Gil Gilbert, Tom Clinton, Sandy Sanderson, Bill Vandersande and Dick McComas. The remainder fearlessly confronted the highways and drove in. All of those who drove are in the process of rebuilding, restoring or overhauling their Mites.

Gil has possibly done the most complete rebuilding of a Mite in our WAMM organization. Extensive woodwork on the wing, wing spar, tail -- including fabricating a new wood monoque fuselage. Steve Frenzel, who is in the rebuilding process, collared Gil asking detailed questions about fabrication techniques. Tony, after selling his prize winning yellow Mite at Oshkosh last month, is feverishly restoring another Lycoming powered Mite. Dave is in the middle of an engine overhaul and Gary hopefully will be in the air soon.

Tom Clinton has the last Mooney Mite built. The M18-C55 model, serial number 357. Tom arrived with a little "wing heavy" and nose up trim problem. We spent a little time Saturday afternoon re-rigging to correct the difficulty. "Flies great now", says Tom.

Sandy, from Placerville, had the shortest flight to Columbia, less than 30 minutes in his fast, cowled-in Lycoming powered Mite. Asked him if he got lost or had trouble finding the airport since he

arrived late Saturday afternoon. (Not really, But it's fun to joke with Sandy).

We missed some of the "regulars" who were'nt able to attend. Doris (with her ever-present tape recorder) and Ben Loftsgaard, Ben Faverholdt who's beautiful blue Mite was tragically destroyed in a fire at the recent Porterville Moonlight Fly-in, Nancy Crews, the Mayor of California City, whose Mite should be flying by now. The Shea brothers from San Diego, Ed Soncrant and his 100 h.p. Mite --- and others. We missed you, all of you, and you missed a very enjoyable and informative gathering of fun people. See you all at the next fly-in --- O.K.?

Two trophies were presented. One for the farthest distance flown and the other for the best over-all appearing Mite. Tom Clinton from Bellview, Washington took the greatest distance trophy and, after much deliberation, Gil Gilbert from Kent, Washington was awarded the best over-all trophy. Congratulations Tom and Gil --- but watch out at the next fly-in! Bill Vandersande located a flying model (free flight or radio control) of the Mooney Mite, had copies of the plans made and offered them, at cost, to us. Thanks for your efforts Bill.

and then, as it always does, the time slipped away. Another enjoyable gathering of friends with a common interest was slipping into the past to join other pleasant memories. Sunday morning we started our engines, waved goodby and reached for the sky, homeward bound.

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