BVA's Logan Informer

Website Wrap-Up

Losing e-mail, the forums, and parts of the website for the past month wasn't exactly the way we wanted to start off 2011. Unfortunately, working on the resulting issues precluded work on the Logan Informer. We're happy to issue the first Logan Informer of 2011 now that we're able to focus on something other than furiously fighting with ISPs to get a fully-functional website online.

Since January 17, Bill, Phil, and I—along with other BVA members who graciously offered their assistance—have worked with more than 5 different providers to try to get full functionality back. BVA's website is quite complex; we use multiple content management systems, including a DotNetNuke website and phpBB forum. Things started to fall apart last December and by January we were unable to email members. During the four-week period in which I tried to solve this issue it became clear that our former ISP was technically incompetent and organizationally challenged. Their support staff and I went back and forth for four weeks as reflected on a 20-page support ticket that logs our conversations. We weren't making any progress and thus decided to seek a better host.

While we may never know exactly why all of this occurred, this experience confirmed my long-time suspicion that our previous web host was insufficient for our needs. I had wanted to migrate our website since I became involved with BVA but migrating websites is a complex process and I was concerned about the impact the migration would have on the community. We are now with a new ISP that has demonstrated technical confidence and excellent service. I won't go into detail because what matters is that we are in a much better place than we were previously.

On the FSX hosting side things look good too. In 2009, technical issues forced us to change from our primary FSX ISP to the new provider we currently use for FSX's server. Since then, we have seen much better service, and have been refunded for the time our FSX server has been offline. I am confident the same will be true with the new website host. Support is substantially better and we actually pay less per month. This ISP also comes recommended by DotNetNuke, our content management system provider.

I am also happy to announce that this migration did not cost BVA a single cent because we carefully researched each ISP we contracted with and were able to receive full refunds from the ones we weren't satisfied with. We have migrated our website, forums, and e-mail servers completely, with no loss of user accounts or information, without paying a dime to consultants, providers, or employees.

We learn from each challenge we face, especially those we overcome. The website migration highlighted two key weaknesses of our community. The first is that many members do not have active or correct e-mail addresses registered with the website (200 or so e-mails we send bounce back). There is an easy solution to this weakness: please login to the website, click on your username in the top right corner of the page, and choose "Edit Profile". Under "Manage User Credentials", please ensure your e-mail address is correct. If you receive all of our e-mails on a regular basis, then there is no need to check your account.

The second major weakness is a lack of funds. BVA has enough money to last until June. If the website and e-mail system had gone offline then, we would have no way of soliciting member donations. BVA uses $2,400 per year to pay for our website and FSX servers. These funds sustain the services that allow our Regional Circuit events, a Scenery Design Team, and the interactions pilots have with the best-trained controllers on the internet.

BVA needs your help! We have roughly 500 members active on a daily basis. If each member donated $5 per year, we would break even in 2011. Would you please consider donating at least $5 in 2011? Would you consider donating $10 or $20 so we have a financial buffer in case we have an unexpected disaster like we had last year? Think of it this way: if every time you talk to a controller you gave 10 cents to BVA you would end up donating more than what we're asking. So can you help us with $5, $10 or $20?

You can send us cash, a check or money order, or preferably a donation through PayPal. Paypal's commissions are worth the service they provide but if you don't have a PayPal account you can make your check to Microvisual and mail it to:

Microvisual
PO Box 370831
Montara, CA 94037

Today we launch the BVA 2011 Campaign to raise $2,000 from the community. Consider how important the time you spend on BVA is…and then decide whether you think it's right for you to contribute.

Additional information about BVA's 2011 Campaign is available on Page 3.

Regional Circuit

Rc

Tuesday, March 8
(8-11pm ET)

KLAX (Los Angeles) &
KSAN (San Diego)

Our controllers fully staff two airports and provide complete ATC coverage for flights between the two; pilots are encouraged to file preferred routes and can expect multiple handoffs and busy frequencies throughout the event

Domestic Journey

Dj

Monday, March 14
(8-11pm ET)

KICT (Witchita) &
KSTL (St. Louis)

The Domestic Journey provides BVA pilots with the opportunity to enjoy medium-haul flights across North America with air traffic control coverage from gate-to-gate.

Pack the Pattern

Pp

Wednesday, April 20
(8-10pm ET)

KIAH (Houston)

Pilots are encouraged to fly into the event or fly IFR or VFR circuits of a busy Class Bravo airport, with full ATC coverage for the entire evening (including Clearance, Ground, multiple Tower and Approach controllers, and maybe even a Center!)

Fly-In

Fi

Sunday, March 6
(2-5pm ET)

Atlanta

Tower (Local) Controllers will feature several small airports designed for General Aviation aircraft. Fly IFR or VFR within controlled airspace; general aviation aircraft (anything from a Cessna to a LearJet) are preferred.

Hyper-Tension Convention

HTC

Thanks for Flying Chicago!

The HTC aims to create the most intense experience for pilots by squeezing eleven controllers into a small airspace, encouraging pilots to sign-up for a departure slot, and keeping blood pressure as high as possible for as long as possible.

Getaway

Ga

March 18 - April 3

Alaska
(PANC, PAFA, PAVD, PADQ)

BVA's Getaway Event takes pilots and controllers for a change of scenery and features various airports across North America. Join BVA as we 'Getaway' to explore new airports and destinations

Pilot Tip of the Month

Contacting Tower Controllers

Controllers will sign in to the highest position they wish to operate; they are not permitted to control any position above that. For example, a controller that is signed in to a Tower position will not operate the Approach position above, nor will an Approach controller expand airspace into Boston Center. Keep in mind that, if no Approach or Center controllers are online above a Tower controller, you cannot receive vectors onto a final approach course; it is your responsibility to align yourself with the appropriate runway and contact that Tower controller once on final approach.

If you have any questions about which controller you should contact, you can always ask controllers that are online or look through the Getting Started Guide, which is located HERE.

Many of you know that the STC has, with the exception of a few basic services, been closed for the last two months. The reason for the closure was basically work load. During our closure we have been able to complete work on a large number of projects that were placed on the back burner for an extended period of time due to a lack of man power. When I opted to close the doors, our staff count was just 3, but we are now up to 7 with openings for mentors still available. In addition, our Pilot Proficiency Program, or 3P, was only a scratch on the surface of what we really wanted to be able to deliver, having only a rough outline of the program. As I write this article we have completed 14 of 24 lessons and I expect to have numbers 15 & 16 wrapped up by the time the Informer is released. In the time that we have been down we have accomplished a major overhaul of the way that we will be doing business, including streamlining our Events operations, which will provide solid STC Training even during BVA events which have posed a challenge to pilot training in the past.

During our closure we have also laid out documentation on how we will be developing and conducting our Aircraft Familiarization courses. These Aircraft Fam's will include not just default aircraft, but also some payware add-ons that are common in the community. Our 3P program has undergone a massive overhaul from what was originally planned. Everyone agrees that it is by far the most comprehensive virtual training program in existence anywhere. The program covers a wide variety of topics, from the basics to advanced weather theory and application.

So what's next? First we should be reopening the doors as it were the weekend of the 11th. During that same weekend we will be releasing a lot of the work that has been accomplished, including the KBAF scenery update, STC Fleet Repaints, and quite a bit more information on our programs. Our STC fleet repaints are all but ready save for some last minute work on the checklists that will be included with the packages. We are also trying to put the final touches on our presentations and student documentation that will help you through the programs. While these may not be ready by the 11th, we should at least have enough documentation for the mentors to be able to deliver the lessons.

There is still a great deal of work to be done, but as a group we have come further in the last two months than we have in the last year, and it's all thanks to the STC Staff's outstanding efforts. The STC is a unique group. Our staff dedicates a great deal of time and energy to this program, and I'm sure that most will agree, as our programs gain more attention, that the effort is very much worth it. We still need help though. If you have a specific skill that you think would benefit others and would like to try your hand at training, please send an email to sharethecockpit@bostonvirtualatc.com or contact me via my Skype ID: virtual-instructor. Not everyone is cut out to be a mentor, but everyone will get equal consideration.

I want to thank everyone on the Staff for their efforts and the community for your patience. We are looking forward to a great spring and an even better summer.


Cape Air Virtual >> Pilot of the Month

Each month, Cape Air Virtual recognizes the pilot who has the most hours for the airline. Because there was no Logan Informer in January, we have 2 pilots that need mentioning! For January, the pilot of the month is James ('flyboydrury09'), who flew a total of 29.2 hours. For February, the pilot of the month is Jimmy ('touchandgo570'), who flew 52.1 hours. Congratulations to both James and Jimmy!

Please Donate to BVA's 2011 Campaign
We need just under $2,000 to make it through this year.

$2,000

< $0 [March 5]
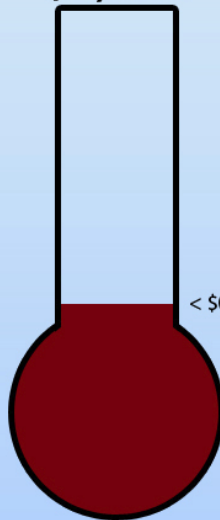
BVA would like to thank those members who donated $50 or more over the past two years (as of March 4/11):

BVA ID	'09	'10	'11
airtangofive	62	52	0
Chuck Wareham	50	200	220
gochase85	0	150	0
KAP501	100	50	0
Kyle Hoege	70	0	0
Pierre (Pierul)	900	0	0
Powerband FSX	0	150	100
Rogerwilco	50	50	0
Ryan Brand	0	100	0
Simon Schneider	50	0	0
USMCATC21	150	50	0
Anonymous Mbrs.	2830	783	50

You can donate any amount, large or small, in one of three ways:

1 > Use the "Donate" button to the left.

2 > Send money through PayPal to bills@microvisual.com

3 > Send a check to Microvisual:
P.O. Box 370831
Montara, CA 94037

BVA's Alaska Getaway

Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport - PANC
Airport Information:
Elevation: 152 ft / 46 m
Class: Charlie
Runways:
7R / 25L: 10900 ft / 3322 m
7L / 25R: 10600 ft / 3231 m
14 / 32: 11584 ft / 3531 m
Frequencies:
Ground: 121.90
Tower: 118.30
Approach / Departure: 118.60
Preferred Routes:
To PAFA: ANC4 FAI
To PAVD: ANC4 ANC V319 JOH
To PADQ: ANC4 ANC J125 ODK

Fairbanks International Airport - PAFA
Airport Information:
Elevation: 439 ft / 134 m
Class: Delta
Runways:
2R / 20L: 11800 ft / 3597 m
2L / 20R: 6501 ft / 1982 m
Frequencies:
Ground: 121.70
Tower: 118.50
Approach / Departure: 126.50
Preferred Routes:
To PANC: MKNLY8 TKA V436 ANC
To PAVD: FAI V444 BIG V481 ROBES
To PADQ: MKNLY8 TKA J125 ODK

Valdez Pioneer Field Airport - PAVD
Airport Information:
Elevation: 121 ft / 40 m
Class: Echo
Runways:
6 / 24: 6500 ft / 1981 m
Frequencies:
Approach / Departure: 119.30

Preferred Routes:
To PANC: NAKED3 NAKED V319 ANC
To PAFA: NAKED3 NAKED ROBES V481 BIG V444 FAI
To PADQ: NAKED3 NAKED HOM V438 ODK

Kodiak Airport - PADQ
Airport Information:
Elevation: 78 ft / 24 m
Class: Echo
Runways:
7 / 25: 7542 ft / 2299 m
11 / 29: 5399 ft / 1646 m
18 / 36: 5013 ft / 1528 m
Frequencies:
Ground: 121.80
Tower: 119.80
Approach / Departure: 125.10
Preferred Routes:
To PANC: KODI5 ODK V357 HOM AMOTT5
To PAFA: KODI5 ODK V357 HOM OLT ANC FAI
To PAVD: KODI5 ODK V357 HOM V617 JOH V481 ROBES

Live ATIS Community-Wide Beta

Last June, Live ATIS entered its initial public beta when the program became available to controllers only. In the months following the initial release, several bugs were corrected and new features were added, and Live ATIS is now ready to begin a community-wide beta test. The tentative release date for Live ATIS is March 8th, and more information regarding where the program can be downloaded will be provided on that day. Although the program's use is not required during the beta period, it is highly encouraged, as the more platforms that are running the program, the easier it is to discover and correct bugs.

For those who will be using the program for the first time, here are a few tips to help you get started:

- **Read the User Guide.** If you're not sure how to use the program, or are confused about something, it is more than likely that the answer is contained in the program's documentation.
- **The program is still in beta.** Although Live ATIS is considered stable, it may crash if an unfixed bug is encountered. Should this happen, please submit a bug report so that the problem can be fixed.
- **Submit ANY bugs that you encounter.** Please be sure to report any bugs that you notice via a forum post in the Live ATIS section of the BVA forums. When you do submit a bug, please provide as much information as possible, including a description that will allow me to reproduce the bug on my own computer. **Please, PLEASE don't let bugs go un-reported. I rely on you, the testers, for input and feedback. If I don't know the bug exists, I can't fix it!**
- **The User Guide is in beta too!** Comments regarding the User Guide are also welcome. If something written doesn't make sense, or if I've left something out, please report it in the Live ATIS section of the BVA forums.
- **Questions and suggestions are welcome.** If you have any questions or suggestions about Live ATIS, please feel free to post them in the Live ATIS section of the BVA forums.

– By Phil ('Ferrari308guy')