

Diamond Point Swift Fly-in Report **July 1st – 3rd**

The Diamond Point Airport (2WA1) is probably one of the most scenic airports on the west coast. Its 2335' x 24' runway is flanked by lush grass on both sides, and situated on a bluff above Discovery Bay at 262' MSL.

The approach to land on either runway 11/29 generates a little pucker factor; anticipating the wind shears that are often present. Our arrival on Friday the 1st offered all the vistas with none of the perils. The winds were calm and there were already 10+ Swifts lining the south edge of the runway in front of Gerry Mahoney's hangar; "Swift Central" for the weekend!.

California Swifters Tom Numelin and Jim & Maggie (his 10-year old daughter) Robison were part of my "flight of three". We entered the upwind leg with the always-expected "initial" to a right break to land. DP locals, Gary Eklund and Ernie Hansen greeted us and directed us to the registration table in the hangar. Everything was decorated with stars & stripes and there were 20-25 locals scurrying around taking care of the final details. The hangar walls were lined with sign-up sheets from prior fly-ins, reminding us all of the depth of our friendships and the commitments we've made to seeing each other and supporting the Swift at these annual events.

If you've never made it to Diamond Point, you can't begin to appreciate the attention to detail that our hosts put into their fly-in. Nothing is taken for granted and everything is anticipated to make your stay enjoyable.

Dot Shepherd, Susie Johnson and Karen Brandmeir greeted us at the registration with a "goodie bag" filled with aviation stuff. Our room reservations were explained and we headed off to our weekend home to get acquainted with our host and settle in. Tom and I stayed with Jay Palmer, in his beautiful cabin facing the bay. The view was spectacular.

Sandwich makings were available to hold us over until dinner so we grabbed a bite and started catching up with the DP crowd. Harley Howell III arrived before us and was across the field tweaking the new GAMI injectors in John Johnson's Swift. Typical of his quality work, the plane sounded and flew great.

South Carolina Swifter Pick Freeman introduced himself and immediately became part of the Swift family. Pick bought his Swift eleven months ago and already has nearly 200 hours on it. He's a retired airline Captain and is really enjoying the Swift. He won the longest distance traveled award... hands down!

More and more Swifts arrived throughout the day. Charlie Hopkins, Kyle & Becki Hook and Howard Means came in from Camas, WA and Scappoose, OR. The polish on Kyle's Swift was almost as blinding as that of Tom Numelin's. I love to enjoy their planes, but am really glad mine's painted... too much work for this old fart!

Swifter Dennis Friedrich from Eugene, OR rode up with Howard as his Swift is having some maintenance done on it. Kent Koester arrived from Cottage Grove. Kent and I used to fly together when I was based in Palo Alto, CA.

Canada was represented by Swifters Bill Findlay and John & Gay Northey, but noticeably absent was Rick Scott. Rick's absence gave us the chance to relive the "set up" Shepherd pulled on Rick a few years back; enlisting the help of a local US Custom's Agent to "ramp check" Rick and question him about an entry he made to the US to attend the Sun & Fun... Only Rick can really tell that story; maybe we can get him to repeat it at Westover!

Washington Swifters Terry McCartney, Nate Andrews and Jim Fernandez were also there. I saw Lou Kuffle's Swift parked on the line, but didn't see him running around anywhere.... Did I miss you, Lou?!?!?

DP Swifters George & Pat Panker had their beautiful red Swift parked down the line from me.... Very nice airplane!

Parked at the end of the Swift line were Swifts formally owned by Jack & Lois Lindley and Jack Van Ek. These long-time Swifters attended virtually every event before finally hanging up the keys. We have many fond memories of them and hope they will still find a way to stop by and say hello to us.

Dinner on Friday night was a great Moose hamburger bar-b-q hosted by Swifter John Johnson. Half of us didn't know what we were eating until we were almost done! Very tasty though!!!

Saturday morning arrived at about 6:00am.... I remember it exactly because that's when I heard the highly-distinguishable sound of a radial engine T6. Did I mention Jay's house is directly under the approach end to 29??? I awakened from a sound sleep to hear a couple of low passes to let folks know the day had begun. The DP Board will probably get a letter or two from the non-Swifters.... Oh well, we loved it Johnny!!

Gerry Mahoney and Sam Klippert provided the breakfast of eggs, pancakes, sausage, fresh fruit and juices. This was no "Grand Slam" event.... It was a gourmet meal...

More Swifts arrived throughout the day. I counted 23 parked on the line at one point, but there was lots of flying so it was hard to get a solid number.

Ernie Hansen's GC-1A Swift graced the line; we all know it started with this little bird!

Bill Gass from Palo Alto, CA arrived in a Cessna 182 with his brother in law. Bill's Swift is awaiting an engine replacement at Mahoney's hangar. Hopefully, Bill will get to fly it while he still remembers how to fly!!! He told me he turns 70 this year.... Bill and I have known each other since the 60's when I was a rookie cop in the bay area and he drove tow trucks, snagging cars driven by drunk drivers I arrested.

At 10:00am, Bill Shepherd briefed a flight to Paine Field, home of the Boeing 787 factory. A 90-minute tour left us all amazed at the evolution of the airplane. The tower was very helpful in departing us against the pattern traffic in flights of 6-8 Swifts. I was #5 in one flight and really loved the view from my plane.

Some folks returned to the Diamond Point, while other did some sight-seeing around the islands and over the Olympic Mountains (still covered with snow).

The Burrito brothers and another Swift formation group entertained us with aerial demonstrations that were enhanced by the smoke systems on their planes.

Saturday night's dinner was even more sumptuous than Friday's. It seems somebody at DP did an annual for Darrel Fowler. Darrel's son is a fisherman in Alaska, so he paid for the annual with fresh halibut.... About 50 pounds of it! Ernie Hansen and Johnny Johnson fired up "BBQ-1" for the fish and really did a great job. Baked potatoes, salads and fresh strawberry shortcake filled everyone's bellies.

Guido Perla claimed it was his birthday again (he does this every year for the attention!!!), so Jean Takahashi surprised him with a special birthday cake that included sparklers and blooming rose pedals (obviously purchased and smuggled in from overseas)... We had 911 on the auto-dialer in case thing got out of control... :o)

Raffle prizes were dispersed as we finished dessert. Everyone took home a prize! Sam Klippert and his band, "Discovery Bay Pirates" entertained us with lively Irish sounds that encouraged a lot of wanna-be singers in the group...

The bar remained open, and things were still going strong when I called it a night at 11:30pm...

Sunday morning arrived with a change in the weather. Low clouds and some rain were blown in from the west with an approaching cold front. We spent a fair amount of time on the computers, searching for the "blue hole" so we could depart. My flight got out around 11:00am, and we had a good flight back to Oregon.

Mahoney & Klippert made sure everyone left with a full belly as they repeated their breakfast extravaganza on Sunday.

It's hard to imagine we only spent two days at Diamond Point. We were busy doing things, but also had time to relax and chat with friends. There were serious discussions about the future of the Swift, the depressing economy and our aging membership, but also conversations filled with laughter where we recalled the times spent with our friends, doing what we love to do.... Flying our Swifts.

I've posted some fly-in photos on Webshots, under the name Swifterdon. If you see one you like, let me know and I'll send you a high-resolution copy. Webshots lowers the resolution quality of the photos they post to save space, so just let me know.

Thanks again to our hosts at Diamond Point. I won't risk trying to mention every one by name as I'm sure to forget one and that would make me feel terrible. You know who you are; know that we appreciated everything you did.