

Airport assistance appreciated

Written by Chris Harper, Beverly Hills, CA
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My husband, Bill, was piloting our Beechcraft Debonair on July 29 about 40 miles north of Gothenburg when our adventure began. We were en route from on our way from Oshkosh, WI to Parker, CO.

I'm a pilot too and noticed our battery voltage getting lower, indicating an electrical problem that needed attention. After a quick call to FAA Air Traffic Control and a consultation of the GPS database, we shut down all non-essential electrical equipment, lowered the landing gear and bee-lined it to your hometown airport.

After a safe landing, your airport manager Dennis Brown and his wife, Carol, were preparing to leave when they saw our plane. Dennis recognized the plane from an earlier visit we had made and decided to stick around to greet us. We taxied to a stop and opened the cowl to find the remnants of a shredded alternator belt. Bill explained our dilemma to Dennis who is retired airline pilot. He and Carol helped us by finding the materials needed to make emergency repairs and driving us there to get them, moving the plane into the shade of a hangar and picking up hamburgers at McDonald's. By the time we returned to the airport for the last time, I felt like an old friend of the Browns.

A suitable replacement belt was then installed but we found that a newly installed fuel mixture control had problems that could only be corrected by making an extension for the control rod. Dennis once again came to the rescue by providing the cutting tools required to modify a part needed to serve as the extension. Shortly thereafter, we were on the way to Parker, CO.

The kindness and generosity of Dennis and Carol and other members of the Gothenburg Airport community who—lent us a helping hand during this unplanned stop will live on in our memories for a long time. We will surely stop by again on future return trips from Oshkosh to purchase fuel, renew acquaintances and trade flying stories.

In September, Bill and I will visit your sister city, Gothenburg (Goteborg), Sweden, to visit with my father's family and we will surely tell them of the kindness and good cheer of their counterparts in Gothenburg, NE. To everyone in town who helped these pilots in distress go safely on their way, it is much appreciated.