

Towlines

The Newsletter of the Albuquerque Soaring Club

April 2005

From the President

Bob Hudson

Hello, silent aviators! Spring is here and great things are happening in the Albuquerque Soaring Club. First, we are getting the club house in shape for the coming activities. Joe Martinez put in a new stoop in front of the entrance and we finally got our gravel in place so that you don't have to "climb up" to get into the club house. Joe also "mudded" in the west wall in preparation for painting. JD suggested that we move the "Final Glide" Plaque closer to the door and away from the bathroom to offer better reverence. Several others thought that having the plaque outside the Danny Sorensen memorial bathroom was not the right location. JD also replaced the lighting fixture over the kitchen so that now we can read whatever we are looking at in the filing cabinet. Lastly, Mitch arranged to get the leak in the pipe by the water heater fixed (ain't that grand, only ten years of leaks.)

Great news...new airplanes in the club. Mark Mocho bought a new (read different) Pegasus 101A. Pat Mcknight bought Mark's previous Pegasus and Mike Abernathy bought a Stemme.

I need to remind everyone that it is up to you to check the status of all our equipment prior to taking something out for flight. Enuff said.

I hope every one got the word on the passing of Lois Santilli. Our hearts and prayers go out to Al and his family. Even though it was a sad reason to gather, I personally enjoyed meeting and interacting with Al's family. On the bright side, we had a great showing at Lois's funeral. If I was smart I would have conducted a club meeting as we had a quorum and we probably could have gotten some issue taken care of.

I hope you have all heard about the Opening of the Soaring Museum Gala dinner. It is the 10th of June and cost is \$50. Get your tickets early and plan to attend. Laurie says we can have your Club Account pay for the dinner. Get with me, Brian or Laurie if you wish to obtain your ticket(s) that way. Lastly, our own Bob Carlton will perform his night acrobatic show over

Moriarty on the 4th of July as part of the 1-26 National Contest. Plan to be there. See you at the Club House.

The On-Line Contest (OLC)

NATO (the military lot) has come to the aid of ASC. No, not directly of course. But major military air war maneuvers are planned for Europe and as a result the two-week northern hemisphere FAI-OLC contest has been put back. This eliminates our earlier conflict with the 1-26 nationals at Moriarty. The new dates for this contest are 9-23 July. FAI certificates will be handed out for the longest flights in 6 classes.

The weather has not been cooperating too well this year, but thanks to a few good flights we are back into second place in the U.S. But the message is clear, the success of Albuquerque last year has encouraged lots of other clubs who think that they can show us how to fly to compete this year on OLC – notably the Arizonians, who plan to come and use our task area during the Memorial Weekend extended soaring camp.

We need all ASC pilots to fly often and for them to file every flight. We need the miles!

Airport News

Brian Resor

The Airport Advisory Committee has been recommending to the city for some time that they fix the cracks in the runway. The city has now got two bids, but in the process learned that many of the cracks have grown to a width that is beyond repair. The only solution is to resurface the runway. As of the committee meeting, the city has applied for emergency funds to do that job. Of course, this is good and bad news in that we could get a new surface, but hopefully the project won't interfere with our flying season! I can't imagine that this project could get funded and started anytime soon, though. We'll see what happens.

The new crosswind runway is moving along very slowly, but at least moving along. Right now there are more paperwork and funding issues being worked related to the archeological surveys and catalogs.

The new parking apron near Mudd's shop has been completed and signed off by the FAA. Tie-downs and striping were deleted from the plans by the city due to budget constraints. The Committee feels that lack of striping could be a liability to the city when larger jets taxi into the fueling area and is looking into ways to get them painted. We are also looking for ideas on how to install some tie-downs.

The phone line for DigiWx has been funded by Clay Keen for the last 4 years at a cost of about \$70/month while the system was on loan by DigiWx. Clay was hoping that eventually the City would apply for a grant to purchase the system permanently, but that hasn't happened. Understandably, Clay has recently decided to stop taking on the burden of the phone bill and so in the near future we, as a club, may have to decide if we want to help support the costs of keeping this thing available for our use (with some help from the rest of the airport, of course).

Internet Weather

Brian Resor

In recent years I feel that I've learned a lot about forecasting soaring weather for one good reason: life is busy and I want to get the most out of my weekends! There are too many fun things to do in New Mexico and it's nice to know before you drive to Moriarty if it's going to be worth the effort and gasoline. Fortunately, basic weather forecasting for Moriarty in the summertime can be made very simple. If the temperature spread is 25-30 degrees from night to day and the dewpoint is below the upper 40's (Fahrenheit), then you'll have a good day probably with few thunderstorms. But, you can predict the weather even better if you take the time to learn about some other information. The club website has *all* the weather resources that I use. This article serves as an introduction to each of them.

Moriarty DigiWx: This is a weather station that has been placed at the airport that we all can use to gather real-time weather information. It is accessible either via the web, or by phone (832-9985). There is a question about who will pay for its continued availability (see the article on Airport News).

Ford's thermal forecast: This data is based on radiosonde observations (RAOBs). A radiosonde is a balloon-borne instrument that measures and transmits pressure, temperature, and humidity to a ground-based receiving station. The balloon is released twice a day. Ford has created an algorithm that processes the raw data to give us a thermal forecast for the day. The page is pretty self-explanatory if you remember the basics of soundings from your private pilot written test. I find this forecast to be accurate in the summertime most of the time.

One-click thermal forecast: This forecast is also based on ROAB data, but doesn't allow you to view the actual sounding. It quotes only the thermal strength and height. For some reason, this forecast can be way off on many days and I don't look at it anymore.

RUC soundings: This is a webpage with a Java-based plot of the skewT-logP diagram. If I had to choose my favorite soaring weather website, this would be it. It looks like the website is supported by the Forecast Research Division (FRD) and Forecast Systems Laboratory (FSL). RUC stands for "Rapid Update Cycle." Don't ask me where that came from, but I once read that this data is measured using a laser from a satellite. The lasers take measurements on a grid of 20km all over the United States and the data is used in fancy weather forecasting models (including BLIPMAPS, discussed next). From this data you can figure out thermal height, strength, cloudbase, trigger temperature, windspeeds at altitudes, overdevelopment potential, and thunderstorm potential. On that page there is a hyperlink to instructions on how to use this data.

SW Blipmap: Blipmaps are one of the biggest soaring advances in a long time. The algorithms were created by Dr. John (Jack) Glendening, otherwise known as Dr. Jack. He uses the RUC data available from the soundings described above to create a thermal forecast at every 20km grid point and then lays the data, color-coded, on a map of each region of the country. He put in a lot of hard work to get the system going and maintain it, so you'll pay a modest price for full access to the forecasts. It's worth it to get amazingly accurate forecasts of thermal strength, thermal height, overdevelopment potential, cloud formation potential, wind speed and direction. It's a beautiful thing when you find a map of

New Mexico painted red with thermal heights of 18-19k MSL for the day!

Also on the Dr. Jack website are ETA forecasts, which pretty accurately predict soaring conditions for up to 3 days ahead. If anything, they under-predict the quality of the soaring. I use these forecasts a lot on Thursday or Friday afternoon to figure out how many days of the weekend I will spend in the air. Even if they don't nail down exactly how many knots you'll be able to climb 2 days out, they are definitely helpful for telling you which days are going to be the best to go fly.

Weather maps: Here you'll find some simple charts to evaluate what's going on in our region. I look for things like high pressure systems (to suppress thunderstorms in summer) or fronts (to change the air mass).

Weather channel and Weather underground:

These are your everyday weather web pages. My favorite is wunderground.com for two reasons: it tends to have very good weather forecasts for Moriarty and it's quick to load over a modem. Here is where I'll pull out a forecast high (and low) temperature for the day, check the winds, and an estimate of the chance of t-storms.

Sandia Airpark Camera: This is a live camera that is set up at the fueling station at Sandia Airpark north of Edgewood. It points north towards South Mountain. This is great in the winter time when you are trying to get a real look at the East Mountain sky in hopes of wave clouds. Unfortunately, if you check this camera in the summertime and the sky is filled with cu's, then you should have been in the air about 30 minutes ago! It's also good for checking on the fog as it lifts out of the valley on some mornings.

Satellite Image: Use this page to evaluate whether or not there are any clumps of cloudy crud moving in over our area for the day. A high layer of cirrus moving in halfway through the day will add some extra challenges to your cross country flight.

In summary: 1. Get an estimate of the forecast high and low temperature for the day from Weather Underground (or your own favorite source). 2. Take a look at the temperature sounding (Java-based RUC or Ford's RAOB) to determine trigger temperature, thermal height, cloud formation, thermal strength, possible over-development. 3. Compare temperature sounding observations with Dr. Jack's predictions for the

day. Hopefully they agree. If they do not, then you'll have to figure out whether the difference is due to a transient event like a front or a band of cirrus. 4. Look at the weather maps to get an idea of the general meteorological forces that will determine the day's weather. Note locations of high and low pressures and fronts. And finally, in case you thought I had forgotten: **LOOK OUT THE WINDOW!**

[Brian has agreed to run a tutorial on these weather forecasting tools one Saturday morning in the club room. Sign up and we will fix a date. - Ed]

New to You Billy Hill

So, you've just spent the kid's inheritance and sprung for something plastic - and now you and the bank own an [insert make and model] and you are wondering what it's going to be like flying your new toy this summer. Can't be hard. After all, look at all the other private owners. They don't seem to be having any troubles, right?

Well, let's look at that picture a bit more closely. From time to time private ship owners have accidents. More often than not it is when they fly their new purchase for the first time or when they have only a few hours in it and decide it's time to leave the house thermal and venture out on a cross-country.

There are a number of questions you have to ask yourself before you venture off for the first time and they are all centered around how well prepared you are to fly this new machine.

Are you current? If so, in what kind of sailplane? The trusty sailpig, (the too dirty three) hardly prepares you for something with an L/D well in excess of thirty to one. OK then, how about the G103? That's all well and good, but it's not a tail dragger and almost without exception any used German Glass you buy will have the main wheel well forward of the center of gravity. Perhaps you have some time in the Twin Astir. That will certainly go a good deal further toward preparing you for the transition to a single place sailplane. Does your new purchase have a gear warning system in it? The new, (to me) Discus 2B I purchased last summer didn't and the guy I bought it from landed it gear up on his very first flight in it and he is a professional airline pilot and races sailplanes.

Have you gotten an instructor signoff? Can you sit in your new machine and find all the levers, handles and knobs with your eyes closed? Can you comfortably reach everything? This is very important. More so if your sailplane has both flaps and dive brakes. A well known race pilot planted his new ASW-27 in the trees because he thought he was closing the spoilers when in fact he raised the flaps. If your new purchase is so equipped, do you know what will happen if you raise the flaps rather than closing the dive brakes? (The first time you experience the sinking feeling when you put the flaps away had better be at altitude, not on short final.)

Have you put the glider in the trailering saddle and raised and lowered the gear? Do you know the correct sequence for getting rid of the canopy in the unlikely event you will need to bail out? Do you know where to find that information? Do you have a check list and have you run through it a number of times to ensure you are familiar with all the items called for? (There are sample check lists detailed enough to suit hyper-anally retentives on the club web site.) Do you have a parachute and is it current?

I hope this little screed will give you food for

thought and that you will have an instructor there when you make your first flight. If you can find someone who has time in your new, (to you) plastic play thing, even better!

Stan Nelson

Sadly, Stan lost his battle with leukemia in March. He was a well-known glider pilot, was a past-president of the Auxiliary Powered Sailplane Association, held several national records flown in the Rockies from the White Sands Soaring Association and won several contests. He had also managed Taos airport, scene of many glider camps. Stan had a distinguished Air Force career (was awarded the DFC) and, as chairman of the National Aeronautics Assn's contest board, was to be official observer on Steve Fawcett's round-the-world flight, until that was stopped by his illness. Also stopped was his plan, with Angel Pala, to fly border to border (Marfa to Canada) in an open class motor glider. He will be missed.

CLASSIFIED:

Pegasus 101C, low time, wings refinished, Becker, M-AV, new bags, Minden trailer. \$26,000. Egbert Kahl, egbert@dinnerin.com

ASC Operations Schedule

		OPS 1	OPS 2	Tow	Instructor
2-Apr-05	Saturday	Woods	Sigala	Hill	Collins
3-Apr-05	Sunday	Ekdahl	Pozzi	Stogner	
9-Apr-05	Saturday	Gallegos	Harmony	Sorenson/Farris	Wier
10-Apr-05	Sunday	Okandan	Greig	Thomas	
16-Apr-05	Saturday	Walker	Walker	Tichy	Daffer
17-Apr-05	Sunday	McGhin, T	Guillory	Wadsworth	
23-Apr-05	Saturday	Huss	Heerman	Wright	Buehre
24-Apr-05	Sunday	Stewart	Hudson R	Buss	
30-Apr-05	Saturday	Wencel	Duling	Carlton	Roeske
1-May-05	Sunday	Denman	Cumiford	Hill	
7-May-05	Saturday	Devine	Graeber	Sorenson/Farris	
8-May-05	Sunday	Friedel	Trammell	Hill	Taylor
14-May-05	Saturday	Carris	Sharp	Stogner	Willan
15-May-05	Sunday	Brothers	Travelstead	Thomas	
21-May-05	Saturday	McKnight	Bloch	Tichy	Collins
22-May-05	Sunday	Buenafe	Guillory	Wadsworth	
28-May-05	Saturday	B Wilson	Ferguson	Wright	Wier
29-May-05	Sunday	Woods	Lubitz	Carlton	
4-Jun-05	Saturday	McGhin, T	Sigala	Buss	Willan
5-Jun-05	Sunday	Martinez	Gallegos	Hill	
11-Jun-05	Saturday	Stewart	Kawal	Sorenson/Farris	Roeske
12-Jun-05	Sunday	Okandan	Travelstead	Stogner	

Call Mike Kleinfeld (281-7908) for questions regarding Ops scheduling