

Towlines

The Newsletter of the Albuquerque Soaring Club

June 2005

From the President *Bob Hudson*

Boy has it been a busy month. The Memorial Weekend came and went with three days of flying and fellowship interdispersed with Al Santilli's birthday. On Saturday we gathered at the club house for a bar-b-que that was attended by over fifty members and guests. Unfortunately our fun was interrupted when Tom Kelly from Alamogordo showed up to claim the Moriatty/Alamogordo Cross Country Challenge Trophy. Now we need someone to mount up and fly down to Alamogordo and get the trophy back.

Included in our weekend fun we witnessed Jimmy Weir sending Spenser Guillory off on his initial solo. Speaking of soloing, the Club now has an official solo certificate to present to our first solos. Please let me know if you desire one and also help me to get them to our first solos. I need a photo, actual or staged, to help enhance the certificate.

As I write this the opening/gala for the Southwest Soaring Museum is rapidly approaching. Those of you who lent time to help with the completion and set-up, I applaud. The rest of you I have extra Ops Duties for you. Speaking of Ops Duties, thanks go out to John Farris for pulling Ops on Monday, Memorial Day, and to Jimmy Miller for volunteering to tow. Because of these two we were able to offer a full schedule on this three day weekend.

As I write this we have three members off representing us in the Region Eleven, Ely, Nevada, contest. The three are Mitch Hudson, Danny Sorenson and Jim Cumiford. Last time I looked we had all three in one of the top four spots. Also, Howard Banks is getting ready to represent us at the Sports Class Nationals in Parowan, Utah. If I missed anybody please accept my apologies. I had dinner last night with Clay and Terry Phillips. Clay is a Naval Officer who is being assigned to Kirtland. He

comes to us from Key West Florida and is "dragging" his ASW 20 with him. He told me this will be quite an adventure as most of his flying is around four to five thousand feet. I told him most of us don't even drag our planes out until we reach 6,201 feet, field elevation.

Soon we will help host the US Team Youth Soaring Camp, please make yourself available to encourage and mentor to these young aviators, they will appreciate it. Last item is the 1-26 Nationals are rapidly approaching; we will need lots of volunteers and support. Try and clear your calendars and support your Albuquerque Soaring Club. See you around the Airdrome,..Fly Safely.

What a difference a month makes

Albuquerque Soaring is now firmly in first place in the US and 8th in the world league. The weather finally decided that we should be allowed to go soaring – and we have. The reaction from the Arizonians? Mostly silence, which makes a nice change from their boasting that they were going to take us to the cleaners.

As a result of better conditions, we have so far racked up well over 70,000 kms with 28 pilots logging scoring flights. Notable among them are flights over 750 km by Carl Ekdahl (two actually, one of them of 863 km), Bill Hill and Tim Feager (Sundance).

But there have been lots of long flights, venturing to the south and even to Mount Taylor as well as up into Colorado. Jim Cumiford, Danny Sorenson and Mitch Hudson shared the trip out to Mount Taylor. Kathy Taylor had a flight over 700km, Danny Sorenson another flight of over 650 km and there have been several flights over 500 km, including by Mark Mocho in his "new" Pegasus. Worth noting: a flight of over 400 km by Ryan Thomas in the club Libelle RU (see below for the story), and a first 300 km scored on the OLC by Lee Geottsche in his Pik ILG.

Perhaps the best trend for the future health of ASC soaring is that newer cross-country pilots are starting to log flights, including Pat McKnight and Jeff Bloch.

Chip Garner may not have made any of his over 1,000 km contributions, but he has logged one of his flights at the Region 7 contest at Albert Lea, MN. (Chip won sports class flying guests in a DG 1000 – congratulations!) Watch for contest flights from the ASC contingent at Region 11 at Ely, NV.

GPS interference: Several Moriarty flights were affected by the Air Force testing its ability to interfere with gps signals. This happened on May 16th and the most extreme impact was to Banks (1XX) as can be seen from his OLC log for that date.

Testing is not likely to affect us too much more this summer, except during the 1-26 Nationals. Bob and Mitch Hudson are in contact with the officials in charge of the next phase of these tests in our region during that time.

Cross country up the mountains – in club-class gliders *By Brian Resor*

On May 31, Ryan Thomas (in Real Ugly) and I (flying my Standard Cirrus) decided to give the mountains a try for the first time in 2005. Ryan had flown to Taos last summer but had to land at Taos airport. I had flown to Wheeler Peak last fall but the conditions were ideal and the flight was a no-brainer (18,000 ft street all the way to CO and back). This day was a little bit different and required what I call some strategic thermalling. I write this piece so that those who haven't flown the Sangres realize some of the planning that can be used on their first trip north.

I absolutely hate the transition from Santa Fe to Taos. There are few places to land. Gallett strip near Santa Fe looks like a good one and the owner is reportedly a nice guy, but it's on the southern end of the Sangres – very useful for the transition to the mountains, but not that useful for continuing north. Espanola is open to the public again but it is quite a bit out of the way if you are headed directly to Taos – especially if it's a day when all the good cu's are right over the mountains. As you get farther north (say, west of Pecos Baldy) then you can be within glide of Gallette and

Espanola, but they look like they are a LONG way away over a lot of terrain that is absolutely unlandable.

Here is where I have to take my first strategic thermals. It's good to get high enough to have Espanola, Gallette, and Taos all within range of your glider. On this day, that was not possible. Cloud bases were barely hitting 15,000 near the Sangres at the time I was making my moves. Fortunately, though, the Cu's were working out in the valley and so I could plan to deviate to Espanola if I got uncomfortable. I'd have a good chance of finding lift and a great chance of a safe place to land in that direction.

With a plan in mind, I head on towards Taos. The lift was good enough that it didn't take long to bump and circle along the way and eventually get 2300 feet over glide slope into Taos at about 20-30 miles out. Why do I need so much? Because I want to be sure I can get there. There's a big mountain between Santa Fe and Taos that gets in the way and also there is nowhere safe to land in the Taos valley on a straight line from Santa Fe, so cutting it close would be stressful.

Once Taos is in range, I relax and concentrate on finding the right lift to fly more efficiently again. When you know you have safe outs, you can be picky and wait for the strongest lift along the way. Other pilots on this day chose to run north over the mountains. I think they did that for the thrill of "mountain flying." Personally, on this day when I looked at the available altitude band (space between ground and cloudbase) and the quality and spacing of the clouds over the peaks versus over the valleys, the obvious choice for me was to enjoy the mountains from a distance!

Soaring to Taos and back is trip most people would be pleased with, but I wanted to make sure I didn't regret turned towards home too early, as I have done in the past. On this day, the lift over the Taos valley was plentiful and the conditions up north looked good, even if I was only topping out at 14-15,000 feet. I continued toward Questa.

By now, RU was also arriving in the Taos area, not far behind me. He must have taken some extra time along the way. He also decided to keep going north.

I chose to fly up the valley again because the cu's were nice. It is not hard to get glide into

Questa from Taos and so I headed north. I arrived in the vicinity of Questa almost down to 12,000 ft MSL. There's a beautiful, long, paved airstrip there at the base of the mountains (which peak around 11-12,000 ft) so I thought I'd have a little bit of fun. I dove at the rocks and made a few passes to see if I could hook any mountain thermals. The winds were right for ridge running, but any sort of thermal lift was very broken.

I was having a blast buzzing the peaks and ridges but also realized that I was 125 miles from home, it was about 3:30, and I was still looking up at mountains. Ryan was arriving at Questa at about this time. We had both started on course at about 1pm. Usually I can get home faster than I go away from home, so a 2 hour trip home meant arriving at 5:30. Allow ½ an hour for problems and that means it's time to head south. Again, the cu's were good in the valley so I turned west, hooked a good climb, and headed back towards Taos. Ryan followed.

If the transition from Santa Fe to Taos is nerve-racking, then going the other way is hardly any different. Again, I worked to get high enough to have Espanola safely in reach and I bumped and circled in lift until I had Gallette well within my range. Luckily, the return trip over this terrain is usually easier on the right day because later in the day the cloud bases are higher and the lift more organized.

I didn't mention earlier that there actually are lots of fields east and northeast of Espanola, especially lots of good ones in the vicinity of Penasco. I've driven through this country on the way to some hiking and fishing destinations in the mountains and can offer one serious warning: watch out for fences. Fortunately the fences often divide the land into narrow strips which we probably can easily land in. But also there can be surprise fences right across your chosen landing strip. If faced with a surprise fence after touchdown, one good option to save your head (literally) is to ground-loop the glider. While rolling, slam a wing on the ground and hold on. You may find that your tail boom twists right off (or worse), but it will dissipate lots of energy and get you stopped.

Also realize that from high in the sky these fields might look flat, but some of them are actually nestled in some pretty serious little valleys that could be challenging to drop in to.

They are also sloped. Take a look at the streams in relation to the hills to figure out which way they ground slopes so you can land uphill.

Anyway, no need for those fields on this day. The lift was good and I met up with RU somewhere north of Santa Fe under the very last cloud on our southward leg. We climbed to about 17,300 and started a 50 mile final glide to get home. My computer was telling me that I needed 600 more feet to make it home, but I figured we'd easily bump that much lift on the way.

It was a long, quiet ride over the Galisteo basin. Totally blue sky from Santa Fe to just north of Moriarty. It was smooth enough that I finally was able to take feet of the pedals and eat my snacks. About 8 miles out from Moriarty I was still 600 feet low. Hadn't run into any lift in the last 40 miles! Fortunately I was now under some raggy clouds so I dumped water and took a few minutes to find 600 more feet. Without a problem I climbed, turned home, and finished. Ryan in the Libelle finished only a few minutes after me. That's probably the most exciting flight that Libelle has had in a long time, and definitely Ryan's best ever flight in a glider!

It was a good day for flying north, but not the best. For me, it was a day that required taking lots of thermals just to get myself to safe altitudes at key locations. With the right planning ahead of time, flying north can be totally safe and relatively stress-free, and is certainly rewarding and beautiful.

Galisteo Lake Airstrip *By Brian Resor*

Mitch recently decided to drop in to the old airstrip near the little pond that is southwest of Galisteo. I went to retrieve him. The first piece of advice is that if you plan to land there, then you need to plan on walking 2-3 miles east on the dirt road out to Highway 41. You'll end up on the hiway right across the street from the Galisteo rodeo grounds. Unless Mitch or I are coming to get you, your crew will *not* be able to figure out how to get back to the airstrip.

The next piece of advice is not to land there...I know I know, as if we ever *want* to land anywhere but Moriarty, anyway. Late that evening Mitch and I met the landowner. He has been there for a few years now and he is not the guy who built the airstrip and hangar.

He was a very nice guy, but really was uncomfortable with us being there. He doesn't want people dropping in.

He never said exactly why, but we suspect it had something to do with the 24-hour guard at the property entrance on Hwy-41. They were filming at the movie set (yes, there's a wild-west movie set back there) and there were celebrities around - supposedly J-Lo and Woody Harrelson. He might have been more pleased with us had we known to stop at the little brown trailers just to the NW (I think?) of the airstrip to let someone know what had happened. Mitch just didn't know where to go.

If you do have to land there in an emergency, do your best to find the trailers or ask for help

from anyone else you can find. Let someone know that you are dragging a glider trailer back there before you do it. Realize that we've been warned and the next visitor might not be treated so politely. Almost every time we land off-field, we have to remember that we are trespassing and have to do our best to do what the landowner wishes.

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2005 Moriarty Operations Schedule

		OPS 1	OPS 2	Tow	Instructor
18-Jun-05	Saturday	Boyce	Ekdahl	Wadsworth	Buehre
19-Jun-05	Sunday	Vreedenburg	Levy	Wright	
25-Jun-05	Saturday	Sharp	Huss	Sorenson/Farris	Collins
26-Jun-05	Sunday	Wencel	Hudson R	Carlton	
2-Jul-05	Saturday	Pozzi	Duling	Hill	Daffer
3-Jul-05	Sunday	Denman	Heerman	Stogner	
9-Jul-05	Saturday	Devine	Graeber	Thomas	Miller
10-Jul-05	Sunday	Trammell	B Wilson	Tichy	
16-Jul-05	Saturday	Carris	Friedel	Wadsworth	Roeske
17-Jul-05	Sunday	Brothers	Ferguson	Wright	
23-Jul-05	Saturday	Walker	Walker	Hill	
24-Jul-05	Sunday	Harmony	Greig	Thomas	Taylor
30-Jul-05	Saturday	Cumiford	McKnight	Carlton	Willam
31-Jul-05	Sunday	Bloch	Buenafe	Stogner	
6-Aug-05	Saturday	Vreedenburg	Levy	Sorenson/Farris	Wier
7-Aug-05	Sunday	Boyce	McGhin, T	Tichy	
13-Aug-05	Saturday	Sigala	Ekdahl	Wadsworth	Buehre
14-Aug-05	Sunday	Lubitz	Martinez	Wright	
20-Aug-05	Saturday	Gallegos	Woods	Carlton	
21-Aug-05	Sunday	Okandan	Stewart	Hill	
27-Aug-05	Saturday	Kawal	Pozzi	Sorenson/Farris	
28-Aug-05	Sunday	Ferguson	Guillory	Stogner	

Call Bob Hudson (temporary Chief Ops) for questions regarding scheduling

Editor's helper note: We're sorry that the most up-to-date roster could not be included this month. Everyone is on travel this month (Parowan, Ely, Portland, etc.) and I didn't have access to my home computer. Look for the latest and greatest next month! - Brian