

# Towlines

The Newsletter of the Albuquerque Soaring Club

June 2006

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## **From the President** *By Bob Hudson*

Can you believe this June; already we are seeing a tremendous rise in personal records being flown. I really appreciate the Geoff Aiken approach to flying. Geoff looked at possible flight scenarios and designed a personal record attempt and went out and tried to execute his plan. This is far preferable to just taking off and then start looking for some ideas. Ask him about it.

Well, Mitch is back, and not a minute too soon. He already has the swamp cooler operating and has bagged an 800 plus kilometer flight. It is good to have Mitch back even it is only for a short time. Now we just need to see Danny over here for a few flights. I call that supporting the troops.

By the time you read this we will have both tow planes back and both are one hundred percent. It is good to have all the equipment up and operating, but it has come with a cost. We need to be extremely careful with our equipment so that we can build back up our cash reserves. Equipment costs are not the only culprits picking our pocketbook; our insurance has taken a steep climb, up by over four thousand dollars this year.

An event took place recently that was quietly passed unnoticed and that was the departure of Laurie Carlton as our book keeper. For years Laurie has ably handled the books for this organization. She took the club through a potentially ugly IRS audit and came out clean. She has helped to keep several club presidents, myself included, out of trouble. She is responsible for keeping the executive board

honest...and that is hard with this board. Her cheerful approach and meticulous record keeping will be missed. While Laurie's departure is unfortunate we are fortunate to have an able replacement in Erika Zahnle. Erika also handles the books for Sundance so she knows the soaring scene, welcome aboard Erika.

I want to remind you that the Executive Board meets the last Tuesday of every month at 6pm at the La Hacienda Restaurant, Central and Tramway (almost). Any member is welcome to attend or witness the buffoonery. If you don't want to attend don't hesitate to bring issues to any of your board members.

It is time to give the "ask not what your club can do for you but what you can do for your club" speech. Lately, we have had a lot of Operations "no shows". This is totally irresponsible on the part of a club member. Besides the obvious hard feelings it produces with your club mates it makes the operation potentially unsafe. Operations duty doesn't come around that often and we give enough notice so that folks can make arrangements should they be unable to fulfill their commitment but it is unacceptable to just blow it off.

We still have a hard time with folks performing basic housekeeping function in our club house. When you can't put anything into the trash can then I think it is time to empty them. Please, do your part.....and, oh yeah, fly safe!

## **OLC latest**

There have been some magnificent flights during June, so many in fact that there are too many to list (full details on the OLC web site). But there have been three flights over 1000 km, by Joe Shepherd and Tim Feager (Sundance) and a 958km by B Hill. Around a dozen flights of over 750km were also logged.

Albuquerque's score was boosted by the four flying in the Region 9 contest (see story below) and by the Taos weekend.

As a result we are now well ahead in first in the US club ranking and closing fast on third place in the world club ranks. In the speed league we are running first (though the scoring for this is way delayed) but only third in the US league. Ask Brian Resor to explain this OLC oddity.

The key in the speed league, where flights only count when made from home field (Moriarty), is to fly every weekend. A blown out Memorial Day weekend hit our standing hard. But when many of our pilots were in Taos, the Albuquerque day was saved by flights from Chip Garner, K.D. Jensen and Kathy Taylor, who gained us 5<sup>th</sup> place and a valuable 37 points.

Fly far, fly often and log every flight!

## **Land out Lessons Learned**

*By Bob Hudson*

This is the analysis of the recovery of Howard Banks. If you remember from last month we almost lost Howard because of an extensive amount of time trying to get him out of the wilderness, caused mostly by a lack of prior planning. Well this month we are going to explore what went wrong.

First, we never established what frequency we would use to try and reach Howard. Howard wisely stayed on the Albuquerque

Soaring Club intraplane frequency, but those of us looking for him kept switching back and forth from intraplane to Moriarty common because we weren't sure if he was listening. Lesson learned: coordinate radio frequency use prior to departing the scene. ( Note: VHF is really line of sight and has no over the horizon capability. Also cell phones are useless miles from a major road or town.)

There was confusion as to what GPS coordinates were being passed. We could have used bearing and distance from a common turn point. Lesson learned is we have to be exact as possible when passing land out data. The data passed must be recognizable and compatible with the charts/maps we use to affect a recovery. You should practice plotting GPS coordinates onto charts if you have never done that before.

Any item in a personal land out kit should be tested prior to incorporating it in your plane. Space blankets are neat, but it turns out you can't wrap your feet in them with the configuration of most glider cockpits. Likewise, your parachute won't give you much warmth retention, though it is better than nothing. Lesson learned: You might be better off with two space blankets and you will have to wrap each foot and leg separately.

Howard had a flare in his kit yet his flare required a match to activate. Well, Howard didn't have a match. Lesson learned: purchase self igniting flares or make arrangements to have matches...preferably waterproof. Every ex-scout knows how to make waterproof matches (coat the match head with nail polish) or buy some from a camping store.

We didn't do everything wrong. Howard had a small Maglite flashlight and I saw that light about a mile away. In fact that is what zeroed us in to him. Don't underestimate the power of one of those little flashlights, but check the batteries often. Each year as you change the batteries in your smoke detectors (you do,

don't you?), change the battery in your Maglight.

About ten miles from the airfield it dawned on me that I hadn't checked Howard's trailer to see if everything was in there or even if it was unlocked and we had a key. Thank goodness, Jim Cumiford had thought to check it all out. I only bring this out because we had another club member land out and the recovery team grabbed the correct trailer and as they were pulling out of the airport, another club member remembered that the fuselage cradle was not in the trailer. It would have been embarrassing to drive an hour only to find out the airplane wasn't going into the trailer. Lesson learned: Don't leave the airport until you are sure you have all the equipment and tools required to safely recover the airplane.

In the desert the temperature drops very quickly after the sun goes down with forty degree differentials are not unheard of. It is safe to assume that the pilot of an offsite glider landing is probably not dressed for these conditions. Lesson learned: If you are not going to return immediately, such as would happen if you are bringing the plane back and need to take it apart, have a blanket or heavy jacket available. The pilot you're recovering will be thankful.

As we left the airfield, the second time, Jim and I stopped for dinner, it was about 10pm. It never occurred to us to bring something for Howard to eat. Something to eat would have helped Howard to get the temperature in his body sugar up...sorry Howard, we were thinking of ourselves. Well, no need for the recovery team to suffer. Fortunately Jimmy Wier bought hot strong coffee.

The bottom line of this exercise is that each time you strap your plane to your butt, you need to consider what you would do if you don't complete the mission as planned. Rest assured your club mates will work to get you, but sometimes it isn't going to be as rapid as you wish.

Lastly, remember, there aren't a lot of gas stations open late at night in the middle of the Land of Enchantment. Leave Moriarty with a full tank.

I was asked why I was so persistent in getting to Howard and all I can say is that I had this image of our resident Brit stuck out in the New Mexican high desert with the banjos of "Deliverance" playing in the background. "Squeal like a pig, Howard."

## **Seven Days, Four Knights**

*By Billy Hill*

After a breakfast gathering at Le Peep's round table, four Knights of the ASC, Jim Cumiford, Angel Pala, Brian Resor, and your scribe departed forthwith in order to joust with fellow fliers from within and outside our region. After a few pee'n pit stops, we arrived at Turf gliderport. It was the Saturday before the practice day and the winds were blowing like the hammers of hell. The locals were up and reporting lift on the order of eight knots. Because of the winds and the drive from Moriarty, we elected to forgo flying until the next day.

Winning the practice day (a 2:30 min TAT), is considered the "Kiss of Death" and to be avoided at all costs. It's been said that some pilots will not even turn in their flights on the practice day for that reason. After winning the day, I was reminded by Paul Cordell – an old friend as well as a contest official - of the "curse of first," on a day that doesn't count. Well Paul, we shall see.

Pacing during the course of a contest, and while on course for that matter, is an important part of any contest. One should spend the practice day(s) learning the task area. On the other hand, there is no reason not to learn the lay of the land at a winning speed.

The first contest day was an assigned speed task of 221 miles. We flew over much of

the same area as the day before except that the second leg took us further to the northwest. Winning speed was 81.71 mph in standard, and 83.41 in 15 meter. The sports boys had a three hour TAT with a winning handicapped speed of 59.68 mph. At the end of the day, Brian was in second, (fourteen points out of first and Angel in sixth, (229 points out of first.) Jim was fifty-seven points out of first in fifteen meter, and I was 31 from the leader in Standard class.

Throughout the contest Charlie Minner put the standard and 15 meter class over the same course and the sports in the same general area. This was quite helpful as for most of the contest, we flew in the blue. It's far easier to make good time if you can find and connect with the little white dots ahead of you.

The locals were very helpful in that they warned us to remain clear of the Harcuvar mountains as they never ... that's never ... work. Of course the second leg of the task gave us the opportunity to either over fly said mountains or remain in the valley between the above mentioned and the Harquahala mountains. I ventured up to the northeast end of the Harcuvars and found great lift. I then saw someone midway down the range in what looked like a very good thermal, so down the range I flew along with most of the others.

On the return leg, the Harquahalas did not seem to work quite as well, but were certainly good enough to get us home.

Day two was a three hour TAT which took us into the mountains to the northwest followed by a run to the southwest back to Brenda Junction which in turn took us back over the Harquahalas. This time they were working well and I flew in the company of a goodly number of both the standard and 15 meter fleet. We then flew back up the spine of the Harcuvars- which were again prodigious thermal producers - to Date Creek and from there, home.

The sports lads also had a three hour TAT. Although their turn points kept them closer to home, the New River TP to the northeast of Turf proved to be Brian's un-doing as he landed out and dropped to eight place. Angel was in fifth, Jim in fourth. I was just eight points off the first place position for the day which was won by former standard class champ Ken Sorenson, (who had had a very poor first day.) When the dust settled, I found my self at the head of the pack and in first place overall.

In his report to the SSA web site of the contest, Charlie Minner stated that in previous years I had been handicapped by an inferior plane. Not so! Chris Flemming showed us standard class pilots what a well flown first generation Discus could do by winning the fifth contest day.

On the third day we were given yet another TAT of three hours, fifteen minutes during which I managed to finish the task in under the prescribed time. When you do that, the speed you are given is based on minimum task time regardless of how fast you fly it. Additionally I was plagued by water in my static ports which caused the airspeed to work somewhat erratically when it bothered to work at all. The reason I didn't fly back to Turf and land is because I had other gliders to fly with and thereby a reference as to my actual speed. Of course we flew back over both the notorious don't-even-think-about-flying-over-them mountains and all went reasonably well.

Ralph Bergh had a thousand point day which put him at my six o'clock in the overall standings and closing.

Although the day's position is an important part of the equation, the point spread is really what tells the picture. It wasn't a great day for me, but good enough to keep me in first place overall.

Jim had a really bad day and fell from grace. On the other hand, Angel had a second place daily finish which moved him into third overall. Brian made up for his land out by placing third for the day.

The fourth day arrived and with it, a forecast which looked rather bleak. Charlie gave both standard and 15 meter an assigned speed task of 159 miles. This took us yet again up over the Harquahalas. Although the lift started later than on previous days, the thermal strength and max altitude turned out to be quite a bit better than forecast. Both the standard class winner (me), and the 15 meter class winner, flew the task in under two hours which devalued the day.

Angel flew a consistent fourth place for the day which kept him in third overall. Brian fell from grace and landed out.

Jim was almost twenty miles per hour off the pace in a class that was being flown by some very good pilots in some much better and newer equipment. Jim is a far better pilot than the standings would indicate and I suspect were he to fly in sports class he would fair quite well. Hopefully he will soon sell his vintage Ventus and upgrade to something newer and faster.

The fifth contest day, which called for going north over the Bradshaw mountains on an assigned task of 253 miles was almost my undoing. If you look at my trace as seen on SeeYou, you will note that I spent almost an hour scratching around almost thirty miles north of the start cylinder. The locals will tell you that the only way to get up over the Bradshaws and from there north is to stay on the west side of the Lake Pleasant. Wanna guess which side of the lake I tried climbing out on? I found my self going further and further north in order to find enough lift to keep from landing out. By the time I got high enough to get back to the start cylinder, the rest of the fleet was long gone. I managed to get up and going on the Bradshaws along with KC and AA who had also found getting out of town somewhat difficult. My initial projection on returning to Turf was about seven PM. Since the lift had been known to quit about five or so, I was a bit discouraged by the prospects of not completing the task. Alan Adams had decided to blow off the task and just

returned to Turf and called it a day. Whilst on course, I had to give myself a serious lecture about not quitting. The net result was seventh for the day which put me three points out of overall first place behind Ralph Bergh who flew a far more consistent contest than I did. This is the day where Chris Fleming showed everyone what the old first generation Discus could do by winning the day against some top pilots in his first ever glider contest.

John Seaborn blistered around the course at 97 mph which was eleven mph faster than the standard class ships. Jim Cumiford was sixteen mph off the pace which gave him a ninth for the day. Again, Jim just needs a better glider.

Brian had a third for the day in sports and Angel held on to his third place standing.

The last day, and Charlie decided to give us another look at the mountains as well as the Grand Canyon if you chose to fly that far into the Valle turn point which had a twenty mile radius.

Since I was three points behind the current leader Ralph Bergh, I saw no point in holding back and so flew as fast and hard as I could. The last two days were marked with puffy little white dots. I had almost forgotten what cumulus clouds looked like much less how to read them. However, it was a real treat to be able to look down into that big ditch north of the Valle TP from just below cloud base.

After finishing and parking my trusty steed, I dropped off my GPS download at contest HQ. Scores had not as yet been posted, so I had no idea how I had done. I headed back to de-rig the Discus and get her in the trailer. By the time this was done, it was almost dark. As I returned to the scorer's office I saw Ralph Bergh who was laughing and joking with some of the other pilots. Because of his jovial mood, I assumed he had bested me. He had not. Ralph made a point of congratulating me on winning the contest. In turn I told him that he had flown a more consistent contest

than I had. The difference was that I had a few better days than he.

In 15 meter, John Seaborn again won the day with a 97 mph speed. Jim ended up at the bottom of the heap, but only for the reasons stated above. If you look at the score sheet, you will see that there was not one glider as old as the one he is flying.

Brian had a third place for the day which moved him up. Angel just couldn't get out of town and so ended up with no score for the day.

I have less than fond memories of contests wherein the daily meetings, to say nothing

of the mandatory first pilots meeting would drag on as a few contestants would masticate the minutia to be found in the contest rules. Nothing like that happened at Turf. Even with only three tow planes, all went smoothly and nary a disparaging word was to be heard. Hats off and kudos to all who worked so hard to make the Region 9 contest a resounding success!

As for the four Knights of the ASC, they certainly have naught but to hold their heads up high as a good showing was made by all.

## 2005 Moriarty Operations Schedule

Date	OPS 1	OPS 2	Instructor	Tow Pilot
Jul 2 Sunday	BROTHERS L	KAWAL D	TAYLOR K	STOGNER M
Jul 8 Saturday	BANKS H	HARE J	WIER J	WADSWORTH H
Jul 9 Sunday	VREDENBURG P	HUDSON R		WILLAN V
Jul 15 Saturday	CARRIS M	McKNIGHT P		WRIGHT R
Jul 16 Sunday	LUBITZ M	SIGALA M		CARLTON R
Jul 22 Saturday	EKDAHL C	GUILLORY S		HILL W
Jul 23 Sunday	MARTINEZ J	HEERMANN A		STOGNER M
Jul 29 Saturday	SANDERS R	WOODS R		THOMAS R
Jul 30 Sunday	PHILLIPS C	Morrison L		TICHY T
Aug 5 Saturday	HARMONY D	BLOCH J		WADSWORTH H
Aug 6 Sunday	HUSS J	BOYCE J		WILLAN V
Aug 12 Saturday	MOCHO M	FERGUSON K		WRIGHT R
Aug 13 Sunday	AIKEN G	BUENAFE C		HILL W
Aug 19 Saturday	STEWART W	POZZI G		CARLTON R
Aug 20 Sunday	CUMIFORD Jr. J	WILSON B		STOGNER M
Aug 26 Saturday	BROTHERS L	KAWAL D		THOMAS R
Aug 27 Sunday	BANKS H	HARE J		TICHY T
Sep 2 Saturday	VREDENBURG P	OKANDAN M		
Sep 3 Sunday	CARRIS M	LUBITZ M		