

# Towlines

The Newsletter of the Albuquerque Soaring Club

September 2007

## **Reminder! Club special membership meeting**

Sept 25, 2007 at 6.30 pm

To be held at Heroes and Legends, which is located at Indian School just east of Tramway.

Full cash bar and food available (but see below).

The meeting is to discuss two changes to the by-laws proposed by the Board

(full details were published in August Towlines).

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

Well, I just got back from traveling to San Antonio (actually Randolph Air Force Base) to pin Navigator Wings on our own Mitch Hudson. It was a great experience and a lot of fun. The first thing you notice when you get around these young aviators is that if these young men and women are the caliber of Officers our military is turning out, then we are okay. I met some of the finest examples of young men and women and am proud to have them looking after my welfare.

Some more good news. Austin Heerman completed his power plane upgrade training and received his Instrument Rating and Mary Hawkins soloed in the 2-33...but, you know, her dog Molly couldn't have cared less. Good on you Mary and Austin! Talking of Mary, her husband Tim Hawkins has just decided to buy Brian Resor's trusty Standard Cirrus. Brian is moving on to an ASW-20C, which he says will be at the field ready to go for the last weekend in September.

As you know, if you have been reading your Towlines, we will be reporting, in the next issue, on the results of our upcoming Club meeting to decide on which direction we need to go with regard to the Soaring Society of America. I need all of you to weigh in on this critical issue so plan to attend the meeting held at the Heroes and Legends Tavern at Tramway and Indian School on the 25<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday) of September.

Speaking of Towlines, Billy Hill reported in the last issue about a new program to help ensure our equipment is being well maintained called Plane Captains. So far we have only three people come forward to volunteer as Plane Captains. If you volunteer to be a Plane Captain we will put your name under the canopy, just like on a military flight line. So if interested stand up and give a call. The three volunteers are Billy Hill (62Y) and Mary Hawkins, with assistant Plane Captain Willete Senter (Spirit of Santilli).

Keep in mind we will be holding the election of new officers in December and holding our traditional Gala in January. These events will be followed by our volunteer involvement in the Annual SSA Convention that will be held here in February. (Speaking of the Convention, I am searching for volunteers, I have a few who have verbally committed, but I will need a bunch more...my phone/e-mail awaits your answer.

On the OLC front, we finished the Worldwide OLC League second in the World! (Remember this is the contest where our three fastest two and half hour flights each weekend [over nineteen weeks] is compared with flights elsewhere in the World) Even though this is a step down (we won last year), it was amazing because we were hampered by multiple weekends of bad flying conditions in which we didn't even launch a ship.

The fight put up by our weekend OLC warriors was amazing and we can all be proud of the effort put out by our Club and Sundance. The year-long classic On Line Contest (based on distance flown) is still going on and after being down by twenty thousand points at the end of August, we managed to climb back into this fight and are only down by six thousand with three weeks to go. So if you have a data logger, and access to a plane, I have just one word for you...Launch! Brian Resor has done an interim version of his statistical analysis of our OLC performance this difficult year (below); it is fascinating stuff.

Well, let me let you go...but remember please fly safe. El Prez

## **Post meeting party**

Following the club's special meeting at Heroes and Legends, everyone is invited to Geoff Aiken's house for a housewarming party. There will be beer, brats, snacks, soaring footage, and a genuine Albuquerque *Flugelhund*. It is 1.5mi from the meeting place; feel free to call or email me for directions. The address is already listed on the club roster thanks to Brian.

Geoff says that spouses not attending the meeting are of course welcome too. Beer will flow at 7:30pm.

## **The OLC – so far**

The league (measuring the fastest flights by a club over 19 weekends came to an end September 2<sup>nd</sup> with Albuquerque Soaring coming second in the US and the world to Warner Springs. The classic OLC, measuring distance flown, ends in early October. So Towlines asked Brian Resor, our resident number cruncher (and OLC expert) to give us an early look at just how all this came to pass. The weather this year was not up to normal New Mexico standards, yet the flying effort has been extraordinary – we flew further and faster than last year.

Following is Brian's fascinating dissection of what has happened to date:

## Lies, Damn Lies, and Statistics

By Brian Resor

The title of this article is becoming a more and more common saying at my work as an engineer lately. Sometimes I enjoy finding subtle trends in data and the Online Contest (OLC) results are a fun little sandbox. We now have years of data on almost every flight out of Moriarty. For this little study, I examine numbers and compare OLC 2006 and OLC 2007 to prove some points. I think that you will see how it is true that this year in New Mexico the soaring weather has indeed been sub-par. However, I would say that Albuquerque pilots have done an outstanding job in taking on the challenge of making the most of the weather.

The table summarizes some basic numbers that help compare 2006 and 2007. One thing that you see is that high OLC-Champion scores are much better in 2006 than for this year. This number represents the sum of the six longest flights for a pilot for the season. Also, the five best flights of 2006 are all higher than the five best flights of 2007. Both of these facts tell us that in general, much longer flights were possible last year.

	2006	2007*
<b>Three best OLC-Champion scores</b>	4708, 4695, 4372 pts	4128, 3839, 3261 pts
<b>Five best flights</b>	982, 978, 886, 798, 784 pts	777, 732, 722, 703, 690 pts
<b>Number of pilots</b>	31	39
<b>Number of pilots with more than 10,000 points</b>	5	7
<b>Total OLC points</b>	156,044	183,875
<b>OLC-League speed total</b>	5000 km/h	6202 km/h

\* as of September 5, 2007

On the flipside, notice that the number of pilots flying for Albuquerque Soaring has gone up by over 25% in 2007. New pilots on our OLC roster this year include Rick Kohler, Steve Hill, Geoff Aiken, Paul Briggs, Bob Anderson, Brian Morrison, Dan Whelshel, Markus Graeber, and Tim Hawkins. Welcome!!

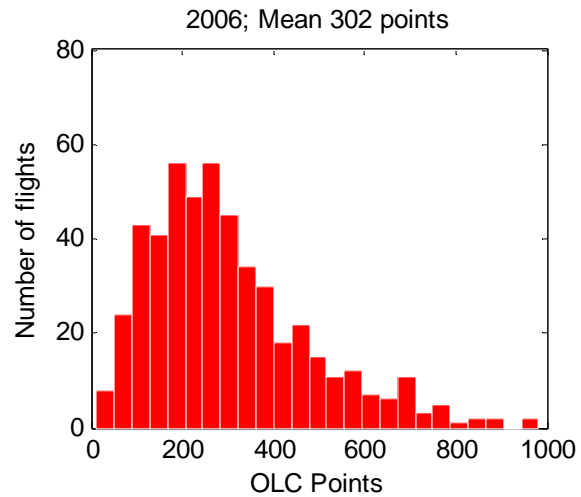
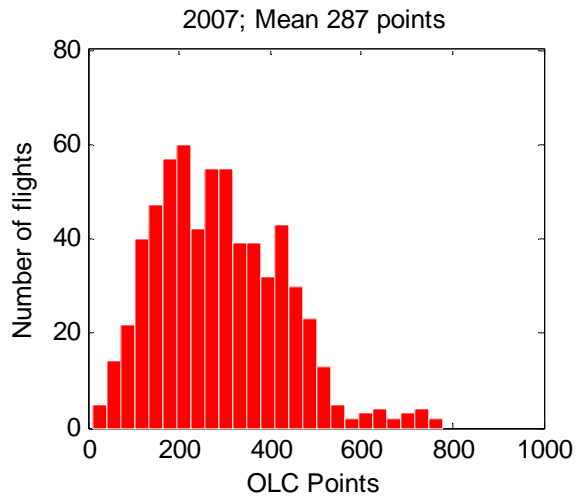
Not only are there more pilots, but despite the absence of epic conditions our pilots are flying more. There are more pilots this year with over 10,000 points than in 2006, and we are not done with the season yet. Overall, we have scored almost 18% more than last year. Again, the season is not yet finished.

A more subtle point, much more open to interpretation: The OLC-USA-League speed total in 2007 is actually higher than in 2006. This means our guys are flying more and faster flights this year. Why? I would propose that 1) our pilots are getting smarter and 2) we are getting strong weather, but are getting sent home early in the day due to overdevelopment. There haven't been as many late evening flights this year as in the past.

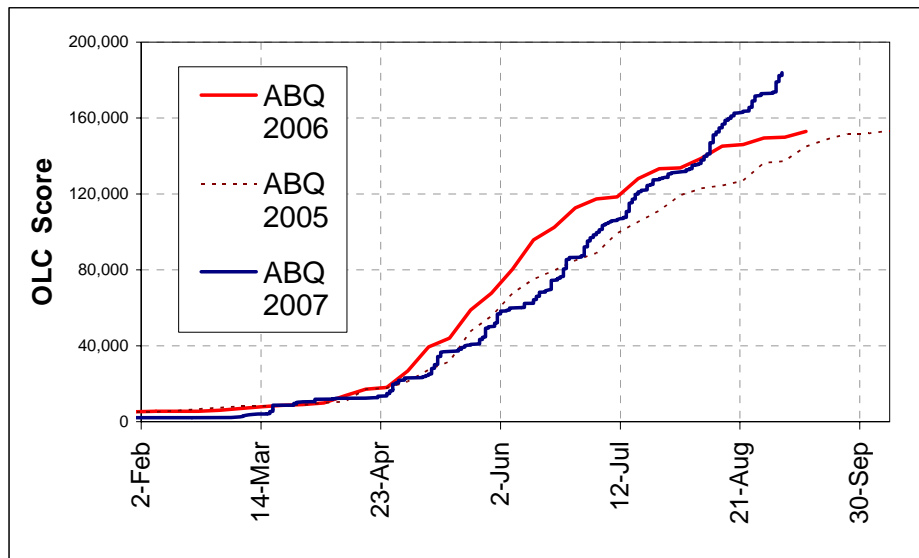
This is a good opportunity to explain the ongoing question regarding OLC-USA League scoring versus OLC-World League scoring. Team A can be ranked #1 and Team B ranked #5 in the world and at the same time Team A ranked #2 in the USA while Team B ranked #1 in the USA. The rules regarding the OLC-World League scoring are hidden on the OLC 2.0 website. If you look at the September 2006 OLC webpage news, it states the rules regarding the OLC-World League. Basically, for COUNTRY competition everyone who plays in a given round will get a score for that round. For WORLD competition, your team has to rank in the top five of your country for a given round in order to be scored on the world scoreboard for that round.

Essentially, WORLD scoring rewards teams for achieving very high speeds while country scoring rewards also consistent participation. Example: your team consistently places #6 in the USA every single weekend and all other teams alternate between flying very fast and not flying at all. Your team will score well in the USA totals, but will never get on the world scoreboard where the other teams will likely rank high.

For comparison, I have included histograms of OLC points earned per flight for all the flights so far this year. You can see that on the average flights were longer last year and there were more really big (greater than 800 points) flights last year. This year, you can see that there were more flights in the 400-500 point range. It's like we're running up against a wall when it comes to getting in those all-day long flights in epic weather.



Finally, take a look at the OLC Points total for Albuquerque as the season progressed. We almost always have flown hard early and then tailed off by August or so, with some activity again in September. Not the case at all this year. You all have really put the pedal to the metal this year starting in August and more than made up for lost time in the early summer!



In my opinion, Albuquerque has flown really well this year in spite of less than ideal weather overall. Personally, I'm still pretty proud of how well our pilots are flying, even if more and more contenders for OLC awards are rising to the challenge of getting to the top.

As for myself, I know I have some explaining to do regarding my low 2007 scores...it was an unusually busy year at work, successful first year of marriage, my new/different house took some time from me, etc. Next year will be better: I guess Congress is saying that they want the Labs doing less work (or is that *more* work for less money?), we've also hired some help for me, and our home is all set. It also looks like I am (.uh I mean "we are") getting a cherry ASW-20 for our first anniversary! As I write this article I am sitting in the Las Vegas Airport on the way home from Ketchum, Idaho (Sun Valley) where Megan and I had a really very nice weekend and met the glider and its owners for the first time. Look for it to show up in Moriarty soon. My mind is spinning thinking about the flights we will have together!