

Towlines

The Newsletter of the Albuquerque Soaring Club

January 2008

President's Notes *By Bob Hudson*

The Gala has come and gone and I am getting great feedback (I hate that term) from the festivities. Mike Mullane, our guest speaker, and his lovely wife, Donna, were great additions to our evening. Thanks to Mike, I think we all gained a deeper insight into what goes on in Houston (the acrimony dealing with Astronaut administration), at the "Cape" (the disdain for "guest" Astronauts such as Senators or clueless academics) and into space (the marvels of flight beyond our atmosphere).

Renny Rozzoni, of course did a great job as master of ceremonies. We had 73 attend and it always amazes me how well you guys cleanup and how great our women look. It was especially nice to see John Farris back on his feet, even though he is now flying a D-14 all weather, night interceptor, metal walker. At my table I was pleased to host Rob Foster, and his lovely and pregnant wife Natalie. Rob had just returned from Iraq and in my opinion is a true American hero. [A longer report on the dinner follows.]

On another note, the SSA membership renewal has come and gone. It was interesting to me that 41% of our club members chose not to renew, or just forgot. I hope these numbers drive the Society to make the critical decisions to put the organization back on track. The time has passed for finger pointing; it is now time to reshape the Society and make it the premier organization we know it can be.

One of our members, Spencer Guillory, has been accepted into the Albuquerque Police Academy. We all know Spencer as a fine young aviator and we know Spencer will make a fine addition to the Thin Blue Line. He also has given me a get out of jail free card. I can now drive like a New Mexican without a worry. The bad news is that this means Spencer will be unable to fly with us until he gets commissioned and out on the streets.

Albuquerque will be better with him and we can all be proud due our association with Spencer.

Moving on, we are less than a month until the SSA convention. If you plan to go, you might signing up as a volunteer. It will be cheaper than paying at the door. We have had a good response for volunteers to help run the convention and so we are looking forward to a positive turn out. If you have any questions you can give me a call.

One of the initiatives for this year is an upgrade to our club house. I am soliciting ideas to enhance the Club House: please give me your thoughts and we will include them in the club's deliberations.

News on another of our members. Bob Carlton is working on a new jet glider. In the near future I am going to force Bob to give us an update on this project -- you will be surprised on how Bob has single-handedly revolutionized the powered-glider field. Soon we will not need tow planes as Bob is moving us into a realm where powered soaring is not only economical but desirable.

So this is January's news. We have a bright future and as long as we keep flying safe, we will show the world that we deserve the premier stance we have around already within the world. Fly safe and fly often. El Prez

ASC Officers for 2008

On December 19th we held our annual club meeting and one of the agenda items was the elections of new officers and the appointment of our directors.

Bob Hudson was elected for a fourth term as your President. [You would think he would have learned by now.]

Connie Buenafe is the new Vice President.

Mary Hawkins assumes the Secretary's position.

Brian Morrison remains the Treasurer. [He says he is doing it because he needs another airplane.]

Billy Hill and **Mark Mocho** are our two Directors at Large.

The appointed positions are:

Connie Buenafe is the Operations Officer.

Stan Roeske is Chief Instructor Pilot

JD Huss is the Club House maintainer

Paul Briggs will maintain our parachutes

Billy Hill will act as Safety Officer, again

Robert Mudd is the Aircraft Maintainer

Don Kawall is our Insurance Man

Billy Hill is Chief Tow Pilot with **John Farris** as Tow Pilot Scheduler

Brian Resor is the Web Master

Howard Banks is Towlines Editor

President Bob Hudson would like to thank all those who worked so hard to move our club forward last year. People who worked as your board members, last year, but are taking some time off, are Geoff Aiken as our past secretary, Bob Hudson as the Maintenance Officer, and Bob Carlton as a Director at Large.

Things are looking up for ASC so let's continue to have a super year as only the ASC can.

ASC Awards Banquet – 2008 By *Renny Rozzoni*

On January 19, 2008 the annual ASC club banquet was held at the Marriott Pyramid in Albuquerque. This well attended event treated ASC club members and many guests to great food, an excellent guest speaker, and "dodgy" table conversation (ask Howard...). [*What does he know? – Ed.*]

Brian Resor provided the audiovisuals and some great photos from last year. Laurie Carlton provided Bob's latest and very exciting jet glider video. In addition, we were all treated to a sneak preview of Mike Abernathy's new soaring film. It was truly outstanding and features several of our very own pilots based at Moriarty. We are all looking forward to the completed film!

The highlight of the evening was an outstanding talk by our guest speaker. Mike Mullane. Mike flew on three space shuttle missions aboard Discovery and Atlantis as a mission specialist and gave all of us some wonderful insights into what it was "really" like flying on the shuttle. We were all treated to both the serious side and the humorous side of his time in the shuttle program. He was very upfront on how he truly felt about many aspects of the shuttle program and he told it "like it was!" We all got to hear about the true realities of space flight!

His talk concluded with an excellent Q & A session and many great questions were asked by club members! Mike's talk was very educational, insightful and very entertaining!

Mike's talk was followed by closing comments from our 2007 and now 2008 club president, Bob Hudson. Bob thanked many club members for their work and support in 2007 and set the stage for another great year in 2008!

A big thanks goes out to Bob Hudson, Pat McKnight, Howard Banks, Mitch Hudson and Geoff Aiken for planning and organizing this wonderful event!

Finally, congratulations go out to this year's award winners! Here are this year's award recipients:

1. MOST AERO TOWS – for risking his life the most times towing those “crazy” pilots.

Tim Hawkins – 166 tows

2. MOST INSTRUCTION – for tormenting the most students

Stan Roeske – 125 flights

3. AERO-TEK AWARD – longest flight out of Moriarty

Billy Hill – for a flight of 841 km

4. ASC CLASSIC X-C AWARD

Best 6 OLC flights – Silver Class

1st - Paul Briggs – 1827 pts

2nd - Mike Carris – 1602 pts

3rd - Geoff Aiken – 1561 pts

5. KIM HARMON X-C AWARD

Best 6 OLC flights – Gold Class

1st - Billy Hill – 4178 pts

2nd - Chip Garner – 3406 pts

3rd - Jim Cumiford – 3365 pts

6. 1-26ER AWARD – for overall flying accomplishments in a 1-26

Bob Woods

7. ASC BEST SPEED – for the fastest speed on a flight of over 300 km from Moriarty

Billy Hill for a flight of 173.0 km/hr (107.5 mph)

8. AIN'T SOARING FUN AWARD – for an exciting and fun landing made without spoilers or wheel brake using the entire Moriarty runway

Angel Pala

9. OLC HIGH POINT AWARD –

Billy Hill for 26,102 points

10. HARLAND ROSS Award – for overall excellence in soaring

Billy Hill

11. ASC SAFETY AWARD – for promoting a safe environment and attitude

Bob Wright

12. PAUL CALLIES AWARD – for the advancement of soaring, for his support of the OLC, his special article in last January's Soaring magazine and for his great job as club webmaster

Brian Resor

13. PAUL SCATES AWARD – for exceptional service to the ASC, for his overall support of the club his work as a flight instructor and his efforts supporting Al's funeral and estate

Jimmy Wier

Now we are not broke, what next?

As those who were at the annual meeting, or the gala, heard, the club is no longer in a serious financial hole. Thanks to some tighter financial management, no accidents or serious dings to equipment, and lots of flying despite less than super weather, we gained a small surplus. This has happened despite, on any comparison, club dues, fees and tow rates which remain pretty modest. And the club reserve has now been swelled to a more reasonable level by the sale of the Twin Astir (thanks to Billy Hill and helpers).

So there have been quiet questions about what the club should do next? Buy something, or sit on our hands and continue to build the reserves until the funds are so large that we can afford almost anything. Well, almost.

Instead of keeping such discussions for over lunch on non-flying days at Moriarty, the idea here is to ask what the general membership feels about this. Please send in your thoughts,

which will both go to the board and also be published here.

There is a clear case for sitting on our hands, best expressed by Brian Morrison our worthy treasurer (who with book keeper Erika Zahnle helped keep us on the straight and narrow financially speaking during 2007). Brian says: "The Twin Astir was sold with the intention of creating a contingency account and reducing our insurance burden. The amount of the contingency account that was discussed at one time was \$30,000. Also, the vote to sell the Astir was taken after representations were made that the money would be set aside. There was never any mention of buying something else. We were nearly out of cash exactly one year ago. Let's not get irrationally exuberant."

Brian also warns ominously that, while we have improved our financial position a bit in a year, that would disappear immediately should we dig another towplane wingtip into the runway or need a major overhaul.

There is also the need to spend some money on the club room and hangar.

The key question concerns the club's glider fleet. What if anything should we be aiming for – and if and when anything is acquired will it actually be flown to make it a worthwhile investment. Erika keeps detailed statistics on the fleet, how many hours and flown by whom. The lack of flying on the Twin Astir was a key item in the discussion to sell it. Here are the hours flown for 2007, split between those who only rent club gliders and by those who also own a ship.

2-33--126.1 hours, plus 0.3 hours by an owner.

G103--123.3 hours, plus 11.5 hours by owners.

Rotten Ugly--39.8 hours.

1-26--14.2 hours, plus 1.2 hours by owner(s).

So, there is a clear split here between two seaters, which are flown a fair amount and the single seaters, where even the Libelle is barely flown an hour a week during the soaring season.

We have a large influx of new members, which suggests that the two-seaters are going to see an increase in demand, with maybe some increase for the transition 1-26.

And now to the questions, where there will likely be clear divisions between the various groups in the club: instructors, private owners who rent little, club members who fly only club equipment, and newbies. While your response can be anonymous if you prefer, please define which group you fall into (or define your own group if you think you have a different one). Should the club:

1. Continue to build reserves and not think about adding any equipment?
2. Think about switching away from basic training (leaving that to Sundance) and move to post-license training for soaring?
3. Move to an all-glass fleet, given the general trend in soaring and the world standard pre-eminence of soaring at Moriarty.
4. Add a simpler fixed-gear glass single-seater (such as a Grob 102 III) to aid transition training to glass cross-country equipment?
5. Consider borrowing to buy a more advanced two-seater (such as a Duo), to add an element to the mentor training that has been a feature of Moriarty pilot development?

Any other questions that you consider important, please add!

While it would be fun to have a Duo available, it would for sure require borrowing (lots) and that would take the club into new territory. Right now we have zero debt. As Brian notes, "one of the advantages our club has over many other clubs in the country is that when the going gets tough, we don't have a loan payment month after month after month to worry about. Clubs with debt are working very hard to pay it off." Brian firmly recommends that we avoid putting ourselves in that situation.

What do you think? Please make your voices heard. You can use either the website forum or an email straight to Board members.