

# Towlines

The Newsletter of the Albuquerque Soaring Club

February 2008

## Safety Down Day

April 19<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m., to be held at the airfield.

Remember, this is a mandatory event. Miss it and you will have to get an instructor check before you can fly in club equipment (that includes getting a tow).

Plan now to be there!

### President's Notes *By Bob Hudson*

As you know every month I put my thoughts and observations into this column, well this month this was my second attempt. You may ask what happened to the first attempt. In my enthusiasm to meet our new deadline (your Board has put a deadline on us of the 12<sup>th</sup> of the month so you may get your bill and newsletter a little earlier) I wrote a great column, emailed it to Howard and proceeded to move on to another project. Well, Howard cornered me and said I had sent him January's column instead of February's. Of course, I immediately thought Howard has lost his mind, but a check of my computer validated Howard's claim. Yes, I had deleted this month's column in my haste to submit it and sent last month's. Knowing you as I do, I thought maybe you wouldn't want to read the same stuff over again, so I am forced to try and recollect what I have previously written. This also gives me an opportunity to add new, more current, news, since the SSA Convention has come and gone.

Let's start with some news...Mary Hawkins has passed her FAA written exam, so she is one step closer to her private ticket. Secondly, I have the check in hand for the Twin Astir. I had to pry it from Mark Mocho's hand as he walked through the Convention site, drooling on all the toys he thought he needed. Thirdly, I want to thank all the folks who volunteered to assist with the SSA Convention. Even though the SSA over-estimated the need, it

was great to see ASC members available to help put on a successful event. I want to thank each one of you volunteers for taking the time to assist. It did not go unnoticed.

And speaking of the Convention, I think overall it was a success. The greatest aspect of having the Convention here was the chance to see old friends and to make new ones. Not having been a SSA member very long, it was amazing how many people I have made friends with in such a short time thanks to the two conventions I have attended. I was down at the Convention Center every day and every day I would run into somebody I have met along the way.

One thing I discovered during the Convention was that there are a lot of SSA members that read our *Towlines*, so I am going to have to keep that in mind as I write...ewa ustma eepka uroa lubca ecretssa ota urselvesoa, osa nia heta uturefa aI illwa ritewa nia odeca.

One of the highlights of the event was the introduction of a piece of software called Condor. This is an extremely effective Soaring Simulator. This isn't a flying game, but software that will enhance your flying abilities. It was so realistic that many of your club members, including me, bought the package. Once Stan Roeske got his hands on it, we couldn't get him away. Thank God the Convention Hall closed at 5 pm, or Stan would still be there. This training device really does

teach soaring. You can practice spin recoveries, thermaling, landings and do it in 13 types of gliders. You have to see it to believe how realistic it is.

The big fuss from the Convention was winches. There were three winch dealers there and we had several members who really studied this option (Stan, Renny, Jim Cumiford, JD, and Brian Resor, just to name a few). They all were impressed with the possibilities, until late in the afternoon when they attended the winch safety presentation. That briefing seemed to change a lot of view points. I will have them report their findings at the Safety Down Day.

It was nice to have our Kathy Fosha come to town and visit us; she was a speaker at the Convention. For those that don't know Kathy, she is a Club member who now lives in Southern California. She is one of the SSA Juniors who represented the USA in Italy last summer. Kathy just bought a Libelle and will be logging OLC lights for us this summer. Also, some of you met Dr. Michael Graves a few weeks ago, Michael is thinking about logging for us also.

The Convention had something for everyone, books, electronic accessories, shirts, and airplanes. I spent a lot of time talking to the Sparrow Hawk people and now have a better appreciation for the plane. If you missed out then you missed a good time. The next Convention site hasn't been determined yet, but it will be in two years. You might start to plan on attending now. And until that time: fly safe...fly often. Your President. Bob

### **Al's Memorial Flight**

For those who were there when we commemorated Al's gifts to soaring, I said a prayer as Jimmy Weir and Billy Hill spread Al's ashes over the airport. I have been asked by several of our members for a copy of that prayer. I include it here, for those who asked for it.

Lord God who, according to the Psalmist, hath made the clouds, thy chariot and who rides on the wings of the wind, be with us who have soared in and around those clouds and have tried our wings on those winds. No greater praise to you can we offer than to include our brother, Al Santilli, with the very air, the very currents that have embraced us and carried us aloft to where we could witness the wonders

of your creation. We acknowledge your greatness and majesty, and because we have experienced the wonders of your heavens, we are humbled before you. Hear us and accept our gratitude for all the blessings and goodness that you have extended to us and accept the ashes of our brother, Al, as a gift and testament to you and to all of us who have carved our way through these enchanted skies. We ask that you mix Al's ashes with the very lift that has carried so many of us to experience the beauty of your wonders. We are grateful that you allowed us our time with Al and for the very life which we have enjoyed to his time...and now, we thank you for this opportunity to remember once again your devoted son, Alcide Santilli. We know you have accepted his soul and now we ask that you accept Al's ashes as part of our beloved environment. Lastly, we ask for you to raise us up on eagle's wings and guide and guard us everywhere, as a memory for Al and as a tribute to your love for silent aviators. I ask this in the name of your son. AMEN



*The Spirit of Santilli taking Al for one more flight.*

### **More about Al**

As I was going through Al's "stuff" I came upon a book, entitled *In Love with Flying*, by Ken Ford. I thought this book was one of Al's possessions as it was inscribed, autographed, by the author. I thought nothing of it at the time, but later picked it up to read, when I noticed a letter to me tucked inside. The letter was dated 9 July, 2007. I have taken some of the text, from that letter and included it here.

From Ken Ford, "I was a member of ASC, if I remember correctly, 1976 to 1982. Al Santilli was my examiner for my glider license, and I went on to earn a gold badge and make a diamond goal flight in ASC aircraft. (I finished the other two diamond tasks later out

in Minden, Nevada.) I also towed at Moriarty. Al remained a friend over all those years.

The enclosed book, *In Love with Flying*, is a "semi-memoir" that contains, besides tales of my own flying career, profiles of nine flyers I met along the way, including Al Santilli. In mid-June, I inscribed this copy and sent it to Al. It was returned by the Post Office, and then I found that Al's Albuquerque phone number was out of service. Understandably, this had me worried. Around the end of June, I got in touch with one of your members who told me that Al had died on June 25."

I went on to read Ken's book and thoroughly enjoyed it. I will make it available to all who want to read it and we will include it as a gift next year to a worthy club member at the annual gala. Thanks Ken for a great memory of Al and the memories of your time flying with us.

### **Currency (not the spending kind)**

*By Billy Hill*

In the unlikely event that you have been wondering what I've been up to during the non cross country season, allow me to elaborate.

After being hand-cuffed to a cell phone at the behest of Cutter Aviation for the last two years, I decided to re-invent myself as a simulator instructor with a company that is providing such training on behalf of the Eclipse folks.

This involved three and one half weeks of very intense ground school – I lost seven pounds - and learning to fly the Eclipse jet using the Level D full-motion simulator.

One of my former peers from Cutter asked me, "What? Are you nuts!" At sixty-five you are going to learn a new aircraft and get type rated in just over three weeks! To which I replied, "Well, yeah."

You may be unaware that the airlines have been training that way for at least the last thirty years. They learn the new aircraft in a level D full motion simulator (as I did), and even take their check ride in it in order to become type rated in the aircraft (as I did.) The first time they actually fly a real, (insert aircraft type here), airplane is when they show up for a trip. Of course the first few hours in

the actual flying machine are under the supervision of a Check Airman.

Any aircraft which weighs more than twelve thousand pounds, or is a jet, requires an addition to one's pilot license which specifically identifies that aircraft. My Airline Transport License will now include the entry: EA-500 S. The "S" stands for single pilot. Not all the pilots flying the Eclipse will be rated as such. For example, Day Jet is flying with a two-pilot crew. You may be thinking, hey, it's a six thousand pound smirf jet. What's the big deal? Yes, it's a twenty-first century flying machine with a glass cockpit, but it's currently limited to nineteen-sixty's technology in that there is no flight director and everything must be flown raw data and ILS approaches must be hand flown. Not easy to do when flying with one engine with a two hundred foot ceiling and one half mile visibility. A flight director would make it easier by an order of magnitude. Oh yeah, did I mention the auto pilot only holds heading and altitude? It won't couple for either navigation or approaches.

By now you might be wondering what I might come up with in the way of a segue which will take us from jets to gliders. Truth be known, I just wanted to brag about the new job and type rating. But wait! There really is a connection.

In order to fly in the manner prescribed above and stay within the Practical Test Standards for an Airline Transport Rating the Eclipse must be flown in a very smooth and precise manner. In order to do this the pilot must have in mind target airspeeds, power settings (not a problem in our case), and attitudes. By using those, the pilot can fly in a very smooth fashion which will allow him to make little, almost imperceptible corrections rather than gross ones which tend to morph into over corrections. Gliders should be flown in the same fashion. Glider related examples of what I'm talking about are the takeoff, the tow and the landing.

In any powered aircraft the pilot should be prepared to either abort the takeoff, or fly a multi-engine aircraft away from the ground after one of the engines has failed.

After a fashion, a glider pilot must do likewise. Before giving the wing runner a thumb's up, those who fly sans-engine should

be aware of the wind direction and velocity. Will there be a cross wind for which a correction must be made? If a rope break occurs, which direction will provide for the shortest turning radius back to the airport? This is why we call out our altitudes in one hundred foot increments through three hundred feet AGL. If there is a cross wind on takeoff are you sure it does not exceed the cross wind limits of the glider you are flying? Does it exceed your personal limitations?

Do you know how to takeoff in a slip with the up wind wing down slightly while adding opposite rudder in order not to turn to the low wing and thus help the tow pilot?

While on tow, remember that the glider has about one and one half more wing span than the tow plane which means that if you are a little bit out of position and have not made a little correction, you will be somewhat further out of position and will have to make a gross correction. Hence, little corrections for little errors equates to smooth operation of the flying machine regardless of how many engines it does or does not have.

The same can be said of the traffic pattern. That cross wind from the right on take off will more than likely be there on landing as well as at pattern altitude. This means the down wind leg will be flown with a crab angle designed to prevent being blown away from the airport as well as maintain a ground track. Base leg will be flown in a similar manner as will the final approach. The more time you spend *TRACKING* down the final approach with a crab angle that will allow you to follow the extended centerline of the runway, the better the landing. Why, you ask? It's much easier

to maintain situational and positional awareness when you are making little corrections in order to track down the final in a smooth fashion rather than making a late turn to final and wondering how much cross wind you will have to contend with. At the point where you would normally start to bring the nose up for landing, you smoothly align the lateral axis of the glider with the runway center line while lowering the up-wind wing enough to stop the drift all the while applying enough down-wind rudder to stop the glider from turning. A technique that I have found effective in performing this pirouette is to lead with down-wind rudder – in this case the left one – which swings the nose to the left and aligns it with the center line. This also tends to bias the up wind wing to drop slightly which is what is required to correct for the cross wind.

Unless there is a high cross wind which may approach the limits of the sailplane being flown, you will still end up with a low energy landing. Of course fine tuning this technique will be aircraft specific and may vary a bit depending on what you are flying.

This of course brings us full circle and back to the title of this article which at first blush would seem to have nothing to do with its content.

Au contraire dear hearts! In order to become the pilot described above you must become and remain CURRENT. This is a great time of the year to do that as there is less demand on club equipment and there is ample cross wind. So, snag a CFI and get thee to the airport!