

Towlines

The Newsletter of the Albuquerque Soaring Club

April 2008

President's Notes

By Bob Hudson

Our editor, Howard Banks, has been all over my tail to get this article out as I am really late...so please accept my apologies, but this has been a really busy and stressful month. To get the nag off my back, here goes.

Well, we just completed our fourth Safety Down Day and all indications from those that attended, it was a big success. But success can be measured in many directions. The quality of the speakers was very good, yet the turnout was, in my opinion, quite dismal. Anyone who wants to become a better pilot would want to attend, one would think. Now I know many people had pressing obligations per the e-mails I received indicating that they wanted to be there but couldn't. But what about those who just blew it off? These are the ones I worry about. Our safety record is quite high and I want to keep it that way.

Let me recap the Safety Down Day for those who couldn't, wouldn't, or just feel above the safety thing, to attend. We first held a Club meeting where it was decided we would attempt to hold a Soaring Seminar next February (2009) here in Albuquerque. The idea is that there is not going to be a convention so we would pick up the challenge to be the foremost American Club and put on a Winter Seminar. It was also announced that we would have a pancake breakfast in June out at the Club House (date to be determined).

Stan Roeske, then, gave a very good presentation on dehydration and hydration issues. The point Stan was making is that hydration should be your number two priority (number one being the safe operation of your plane.) The Air Force has found that the two main reasons for pilot error accidents are hydration and blood sugar issues.

Our own resident eye surgeon, Dr. Renny Levy, next presented us with a very informative update on ocular surgery advances. It was quite fascinating and led to a

ton of questions. The bottom line is that doctors, like Renny, have the capability to bring your eyesight back to near perfect standards and they can do it safely and quickly. If you are still interested in exploring this subject further I suggest you get with Renny or one of his associates.

Brian Morrison then gave us an airspace and VFR operating rules presentation. It is amazing how professional aviators like us seem to forget the finer points of operating our aircraft around clouds and in controlled airspace. This was a much needed and timely presentation.

JD Huss informed us about the changes to the Wings Pilot Proficiency Program. One of the big changes is that it is now completely on line and can be done in the comfort of your home, or someone else's home (Geoff Aiken). To get started, go to: FAASafety.gov. After you complete your course you can earn your very own FAA Safety Wings.

Lastly, Larry Richardson gave a presentation on how to properly preflight and wear your expensive seat cushion that some of us call a parachute. Part of his presentation dealt with things he has found during repack that could have prevented someone from maybe surviving an airborne crisis.

As stated before all these presentations were excellent, informative and pertinent to our Club operations. Notes from all the presentations can be found at the Club House for review by those who couldn't attend. Remember, if you were not at the meeting, you must review these notes and get an instructor sign-off before you can fly in club equipment or get a tow from the club. Evading this requirement means that you will be flying without insurance cover. As they say after the circus, "you should have been there."

Following the meeting we adjourned to the Club House where we performed our annual spring cleaning and waxing of our two glass

aircraft. Brian Resor brought out the Condor Flight Simulator which was an instant hit with all who were present and those who got a chance to actually fly it. We capped the day with a “burger burn”, thanks to Angel who flew in the meat and buns from Taos and Renny (3R) who did the grilling and the ladies who cut the rest up.

We had planned to complete the evening with movies but that fell through the crack and it was determined to move our movie night to another evening which we will hold at Geoff Aiken’s. I will keep you informed of the date. So, as always, Fly Safe, your Prez.

Check lists

They can save your back side, and can even save you a wasted tow (not inconsequential dollars these days). We have not yet had a large amount of flying, given the weather, so they are even more important than usual. Even if you have a super memory and think that you can recall everything, one of these days you will forget something – with luck it will not be something vital to safe flying. So use written ones, and go through them methodically. And if someone comes up and asks you something about something, start over.

Please do not ask how I now recall all this. - Ed.

Marfa Dedication

By Renny Rozzoni

As Howard Banks and I headed east on I-10 after leaving El Paso, the cu’s began to appear. We both remarked that it looked like a good soaring day with high cloudbases and cloudstreets heading off to the east. We were on our way to the 15th National Landmark of Soaring dedication at the Marfa airport which was to be held on April 4th & 5th.

After turning off the highway at Van Horn, we tried to imagine what it must have been like almost 40 years ago when the US Nationals were held at Marfa in 1969 and the World Championships were held a year later in 1970. Van Horn had been a turnpoint that was used for many tasks during the many championships held at Marfa over the years. The cu’s in the area and over the Davis Mountains were looking great.

First a little Marfa soaring history: It starts in 1960 when a group of sailplane pilots including Wally Scott, Al Parker and Red Wright came to Marfa to explore the soaring potential of the area. The “Marfa Dew Point Front” was recognized as the dividing line between the moist air to the east and the dry air to the west. This would meet near Marfa and it helped enhance thermal convection and also resulted in high cloudbases. Sailplane designer Harland Ross also explored this dry line near Kent in his Ross R-6 sailplane and was able to make some long cross country flights. Marfa Soaring Camps were held in 1963, 1964 and 1965 and some of the famous pilots that attended included: Ben Greene, Phillip Wills from England and Neil Armstrong who in 1969 became the first man to walk on the moon. Neil even earned his FAI Silver Badge at Marfa.

Several US National Soaring Contests (1967, 1969, 1972, 1991 & 2006) were held at Marfa over the years. This culminated in 1970 when the first World Soaring Championships in the US were held at the old Marfa Army Air Field located 8 miles SE of town. George Moffat won the open class in a Schempp-Hirth Nimbus and Helmut Reichmann won the standard class in a LS-1.

The 1972 Standard Class Nationals was the last contest to be held at the old Marfa Army Air Field. In talking to Billy Hill, who had flown in with club member Diana Roberts, it turned out he had flown in the 1972 contest in a Libelle. He did very well in a field of contestants that included the likes of: “Big” John Brittingham, Ray Gimmey, Karl Striedieck, Dick Schreder, Walt Cannon, Herb Mozer, Gleb Derujinsky and Rudy Allemann. The contest was won by a very young Tom Beltz. The old Army Air Field was then allowed to “return to nature,” so following the 1972 contest, all future flying would be at the Marfa Municipal Airport located 3 miles north of town.

We stayed at the historic Hotel Paisano in downtown Marfa. The Paisano was the center of action for the soaring operations, and was also used by the cast and crew of George Stevens’ GIANT (starring Rock Hudson, Elizabeth Taylor and James Dean) when it was shot, over a two month period, in the Marfa area in 1955.

Dick Johnson's wave camp ran up to the day of the dedication (there had been some flights to 20K) and so there were lots of gliders and pilots at the field in addition to those there for the ceremony – and the eating and film watching. Friday evening this included a showing of "The Sunship Game," which tells the story of the 1969 US Nationals at Marfa. The film focused on George Moffat and Gleb Derujinsky before and during the competition and revealed their contrasting personalities and how the differences made Moffat the winner. The flying sequences were truly excellent.

Dedication day, Saturday, began with breakfast at "The Brown Recluse" (interesting name, very organic). The crowd of estimated 210 folks was truly was a gathering of soaring legends, among them were 11 members of the Soaring Hall of Fame, including: George Moffat, Dick Johnson, Ben Greene, John Byrd, Ed Byars, Bernald Smith, Hannes Linke, All Leffler and "Big" John Brittingham from Anton Chico, NM. (You should have seen the towers of empty beer cans he used to create at contests!)

After an official US Post Office mail flight by Burt Compton and George Moffat in an ASK-13, it was time for the main event. After the posting of the colors by a US Border Patrol honor guard, the plaque was unveiled and the 15th Landmark of Soaring became official.

Many photos were taken during the event and a video crew was there to record all of the festivities. The video crew also made video recordings of the recollections and stories that were told by many of the pilots who flew at Marfa in the 60s' and 70s.

After the dedication, we gave George Moffat a ride back to the hotel. When he heard that we wanted to see the old Army Air Field, he said he also wanted to go as he had not seen the

field since the early 70's. When we arrived, there was very little we could really see at ground level. There was a very intimidating barbed wire fence to keep us "out" and the cattle "in," so we could not get close, but George told fascinating tales about what it was like to fly out of the old Marfa Army Air Field 40 years ago.

George Moffat was the guest speaker at the dedication dinner (at the Paisano), when he told even more stories about those glory years of soaring at Marfa in the 60's and 70's. One flight that caught our attention was an early 1960's straight out flight that he attempted out of Marfa in his HP-8. He climbed out early in a cu-nim and headed north. Eventually he went down at Vaughn, New Mexico!

As I look back on the dedication weekend, it truly was a historical and wonderful event. To see, meet and talk to many of the folks that I had read about in "Soaring Magazine" over the past 34 years was really a great experience. Burt and Kathie Compton, deserve a tremendous amount of credit for their efforts. Many others helped, of course, but credit also goes Simine Short, the Chair of the National Landmark Program at the National Soaring Museum.

More information on Marfa and its history of soaring, can be found at www.flygliders.com. You can also read more on George Moffat's flights in the Marfa area in "Winning on the Wind" and "Winning II."

Wanted

To purchase a share of OR entire 30:1 or better glider to fly out of Moriarty.

Pilot has Glider Certificate, recent experience in Grob 103, plus over 200 hours in other non-powered flight. Andrew Vanis 505-304-5306 Vanis13@yahoo.com

2008 ASC Operations Schedule

Date	OPS 1	OPS 2	Instructor	Tow Pilot
May 3 Saturday	NEWMAN P	EKDAHL C		THOMAS R
May 4 Sunday	HEERMANN A	OKANDAN M	TAYLOR K	TICHY T
May 10 Saturday	BANKS H	McKNIGHT P	COLLINS A	WADSWORTH H
May 11 Sunday	BUENAFE C	HUDSON R		WRIGHT R
May 17 Saturday	ROBERTS D	PHILLIPS C	WIER J	HAWKINS T
May 18 Sunday	ANDERSON R	ANDREOTTI R		HILL W
May 24 Saturday	RESOR B	WILSON B	DAFFER J	ROESKE S
May 25 Sunday	CATES J	FRAUNFELTER E		STOGNER M
May 31 Saturday	BLOCH J	BRIGGS P	MAXON S	THOMAS R
Jun 1 Sunday	HUSS J	MARTINEZ J		TICHY T
Jun 7 Saturday	HARMONY D	MORRISON L		WADSWORTH H
Jun 8 Sunday	BOYCE J	BREWER V		WRIGHT R
Jun 14 Saturday	AIKEN G	BIELEK K		HAWKINS T
Jun 15 Sunday	BUENAFE C	VANIS A		HILL W
Jun 21 Saturday	CUMIFORD Jr. J	ROZZONI R		ROESKE S
Jun 22 Sunday	KOENIG C	STEWART W		THOMAS R
Jun 28 Saturday				TICHY T
Jun 29 Sunday				WADSWORTH H
Jul 5 Saturday				WRIGHT R
Jul 6 Sunday				HAWKINS T