

Towlines

The Newsletter of the Albuquerque Soaring Club

July 2008

Soaring Museum Benefit Barbeque

Saturday 23rd August

Please join us for the Annual US Southwest Soaring Museums' Benefit Barbecue at the Main Museum Building 918 Route 66 in Moriarty. The festivities will begin at 6PM on Saturday, the 23rd of August.

Tickets are \$50.00 each. Reserve your ticket by sending a check made out to the US Southwest Soaring Museum, PO Box 3262, Moriarty, NM 87035. Or contact Bob Alkov (505-281-7264) or ralkov@higherspeed.net or George Applebay (505-328-2019) for more information.

President's Notes *By Bob Hudson*

Well, of course the news to lead off with is the recent accident of the motor glider here in Edgewood. By the time you read this you will know more about it (I have little info as I write this) and you will be reminded that this lovely sport we all enjoy can bite if you aren't paying attention. The folks who flew the SR-71 (The Blackbird) had a saying: "The Habu (slang love term for the plane) knew when you were looking out the window."

Of course we have had our spate of accidents - er, ah, mishaps -- this season to the point that Renny Rozzoni opined recently at Taos as to who should get the "Ain't Soaring Fun" award this year. A decision was reached, but you will have to come to the Gala in January to see who is the recipient.

Speaking of Taos, I just got back from the fly-in at Taos. Once again the time spent in fellowship was exceptional. Angel Pala once again put on a social, Friday night that ranks up there with the two times I have eaten at the White House (notice how I got that into this article...shameless. Only this time Pat Nixon didn't ask me to leave). I have to thank Angel for once again opening his house to such a horde of aviators as us. The folks who made the trip were treated to a fine meal and a fine time even if the weather did not fully cooperate. On Friday Renny organized and performed Ops flawlessly and on Sunday I was helped by TK. Thanks too to Mike Stogner who flew multiple safe launches, plus ferrying 10Z to and from Taos. Of particular note was that Jim Wier released at all the correct

altitudes, so I guess I will have to stop given him grief.

On Saturday, the weather blew itself out so a lot of hanger time was spent rehashing flights that didn't take place. Somewhere in the discussion there must have been a story that actually was true, but you would be hard pressed for me to relate one. That night we all gathered at a restaurant named Bravo. On a personal note, I was thrilled to sit across from famed portrait painter Allen Polt. Allen has painted many famous people, and, it turns out, several friends of mine; so meeting Allen was a real treat. We also got to meet Allen's lovely wife Jo Ann who is an owner in the restaurant. The next day Allen and Jo Ann joined us for the launch. I am trying to get Angel to "force" Allen down to take a ride with us.

Jumping away from Taos, a couple of weeks ago we held a pancake breakfast at the club house. Everyone who attended, told me that loved the concept (and pancakes) and so we will add more of these to the calendar as it was fun, yummy and the airport dogs provided much entertainment (and by the way, Willette has added an airport dog to our collection (AD) in Boogie. Come out and meet him, he is a keeper.

Following the breakfast we were treated to a visit by one of the original ACS members, Herman Wentz. Herman came in with his family and he got to meet and greet several of the current members, including myself and

Colleen Koenig. The highlight of his trip was getting to see and reminisce with one of his students Stan Roeske, Stan put Herman in the Spirit of Santilli and together they retold a lot of old ASC history, I am really glad I got to spend a few minutes with Stan and Herman as they recalled the old days at Seven Bar Ranch.

Since the last time we “talked” a couple of other things have transpired, one, Billy Hill won Standard Class at the recent Region 9 contest. And Jim Cumiford won the Jack Gomez Memorial Trophy for the fastest task flown in any class at Region 9. He did 95.37 mph over 422.27 miles on the last day of the contest (and this was a no-ballast contest with a start height limited to 6,000ft agl).

Other club members participating finished: Danny Sorenson, 5th and Mitch Hudson, 11th, Standard Class. Jim Cumiford, 4th 15 Meter Class. Howard Banks, 5th, Paul Briggs, 14th and Angel Pala, 18th Sports Class. Good on these ASC members. (*More details follow: - Ed.*)

As always, please fly safely and fly often.

Parowan was a blast

As El Prez has noted there were seven club members competing at Region 9 this year plus Mike Stogner flying tows in 10Z -- and they almost all had a wonderful time. Angel unfortunately picked up a virus and had to withdraw. He had one bit of luck though. Linda Stogner was there until the Manzanos caught fire again and she had to leave, but in the meantime she acted as team medic -- and for sure saved Angel's life (well mostly, Angel's barely saveable).

Club members totaled over 12,500 miles of flying during the contest's eight days (one practice day, seven scored tasks). The weather cooperated, the task calling was superb (our own Z was one of three task-setters). Perhaps the best time was had by Paul Briggs at his first gliding contest – his smile was the broadest on the ramp. Early on he was concerned about gaggles, since in his paragliding days if another pilot got too close you could shout at them – but it all worked out. Mike Stogner had a good time too – and the

club has gained a large donation from contest tow fees as a result of his efforts.

Even the club members there acting as crew looked mostly happy. Jim Wier with Angel (but who kindly went to extract Banks from an alfalfa field), D Roberts with Z, brother in law John with Paul, Leslie with Jim, while Mitch's cousin helped him and Joan washed HL's wings.

What follows are two items that result from Parowan. First is a fascinating insight into the thinking of one of the US' top contest pilots. Second is an insight from a crew member at Parowan which actually provides a serious lesson for each club pilot who ventures cross country and, moreover, a lesson that should be applied each and every time they go beyond glide range of home.

Introspection *By Billy Hill*

During the course of the drive back to Moriarty, Diana asked me what I liked most about contest flying. Without giving the question the reflection it deserved, I responded by saying, “in a word, winning.”

My next thought was that my response was somewhat glib. Perhaps even a bit trite. I asked myself: “Is that what I really think?”

This, as you might expect, gave me pause. What did I like most about contest flying?

For me, last year's Region 9 get-together was a disaster. I had not taken the time to properly acquaint myself with all the subtle nuances of the regional rules. As a result, I lost well over a thousand points to self-created blunders.

Up until the contest, I had been flying for OLC points. Fly fast, fly wet and rack 'em up was my motto. That works well, (at least for the most part), but not always during a contest in conditions where thermals are far apart and where we fly dry as we do at Parowan.

During last year's regional I had a chance to fly with Gary Ittner. He was flying at a slower speed than I had been and thus was not stopping as much for lift. This begged the question: “Had I been flying too fast?” The answer to that became obvious as Gary

showed us why he was a previous US champion by winning the standard class. Although I never landed out during the course of last year's race, I certainly didn't make a very good showing.

By year's end I had flown about two hundred seventy-five hours in my Discus. The question I had to ask myself was what had I learned? After all, I've been doing this glider cross country more years than I care to admit. Had I reached the end of my personal learning curve? Was the mental hard drive full and unable to accept control, alt. delete? Although I certainly gave the 2007 soaring season a modicum of reflection, I suspect that some of the learning is almost at a subconscious level.

I know how to make my glider go fast and far. I'm comfortable with getting low and scratching out and getting back on course. I know how to read clouds as well as most folks, so what happened last year? Why could I not find my own ass with both hands and a road map?

Perhaps I had peaked early and was too much into the racing part of the contest to enjoy the rest of flying out of Parowan. I'm not really sure what went wrong, (although I suspect I had ratcheted up my intensity level a bit too much.) It seemed the harder I tried the behinder I got and the more mistakes I made.

I think this year was clearly different, (winning notwithstanding.) For starters, I tried to remember that I was going to the contest to have fun and visit with friends I had not seen for a year and perhaps to make some new ones along the way. I was going to try and stay as relaxed as possible and not demand too much of my self. I was going to fly as well as I could and just see what happened.

One aspect of cross country flying -- at least for me -- is that my mind can wander if I don't remain focused on the tasks at hand. From time to time I find I must pull my focus back into the "now". Although the overall task strategy may be clear, there are always minor and at times even major changes that must be made in order to optimize the conditions and obtain the fastest speed possible.

On the first day this year, I had a feeling that all was going well. Of course it was and I won

the day with a reasonable margin over the second place pilot. As it turned out I was even faster than the 15meter ships.

As we approached the end of the contest, a few folks had asked me if I was in any way apprehensive about having so many other pilots gunning for my first place position. My response was that I was not. On the one hand I remembered Rod Laver the tennis champion's comment about being in first place. "The time your game is most vulnerable is when you are ahead, never let up." I had no intention of letting up. On the other hand I could only do what I could do. That is, read the sky and fly as well as I could.

This brings us back to Diana's question, what do I like about contest flying?

The conclusion I've come to is that winning isn't everything, (nor is it the only thing, as a wag once said), it's what one learns about one's self. In reality the biggest obstacle to overcome in a contest where you are pitting your self against others is not defeating yourself or self destructing. If you can learn to live well within your own skin, (or your mind, if you will) and are comfortable with who you are and what you do, you will do as well as your abilities will allow. You will fly unencumbered. That is what I have taken away from this years contest.

[That and first place in standard class!-Ed.]

Landing Out in Style By Diana Roberts

As a new pilot who is interested in learning how to fly cross-country, I have recently discovered the importance of being prepared for a land-out.

At the recent Region 9 contest one of our club members, who I will call Dudley Doright, landed out. *[He's the one with the formerly rude tail number.-Ed.]* He had instructed his crew member to bring everything in his tie-down area. Being young and inexperienced she forgot to pack his wing saddles. I watched as the two guys who went to get him opened his trailer and inspected it before leaving to

ensure they had everything they needed. These two guys have been around soaring since they were two years old. They have attended and competed in numerous glider contests. Yet, they did not realize the wing saddles were missing.

At this point you are probably asking yourself, "How in the world did these two experienced guys miss the wing saddles?" Apparently every glider trailer is different, not all of them require removable wing saddles. Whether you have an experienced crew member or not you must have a ***Land-Out Check List***.

After Dudley D's two buddies showed up to retrieve him and discovered that essential bits were missing Billy and I were called and asked to bring the wing saddles. A double retrieve is not fun for anyone, especially the hungry pilot who has been sitting in a field for hours. *Be Prepared!* Make a list and go over it with your crew before you fly.

Those of us in the club who are interested in learning how to fly cross-country need to know what our choices are. Since the club Grob does not have a user-friendly trailer I was informed that the land-out kit consists of a can of gasoline and matches. One member told me, "Don't bother calling anyone, just set the thing on fire and walk away because nobody will come get you!" Not exactly great advice!

The thought of being abandoned is mildly disturbing. Yet, if you happen to forget the gasoline and matches and the fact that the trailer is not usable, then remember that it takes 5 guys to remove the wings. I am not sure I have that many friends in the club. Do you? In any case, you won't have after landing the Grob in some ugly field.

Don't fret, fellow neophytes, we do have an alternative. The Libelle does have a user-friendly trailer and is a good glider for cross-country training. However, before you fly it cross-country you need to learn how to take it apart, put it in the trailer and put it back together again, along with an instructor's endorsement.

Once checked out for cross-country flight in the Libelle you are ready to embark on your journey. The thermals are popping! You have lined up a willing crew member and your car has lots of gas in the tank, a hitch and has an electrical connection that works properly with the trailer's lights. You don't? Well your nice crew had better come with a properly equipped vehicle. You have a sectional with 5 mile circles drawn in red and a planned course (one of Renny's famous mini-triangles). But before you take a launch don't forget the final task. Before you take-off make sure you have gone over your ***Land-Out Check List*** with your crew. Landing out in style will shorten your retrieve time and prevent loss of face. Besides, we all know that if you have done all this you won't land-out, but if you haven't ...