

Towlines

The Newsletter of the Albuquerque Soaring Club

September 2008

Pancake Breakfast

Unfortunately it has had to be postponed. Watch this space for the new date.

President's Notes

By Bob Hudson

I hope you all bought your back to school clothes! Gosh remember when we did that? The start of each school year, for me, was exciting because it usually meant I would get a new lunch box. My favorite lunch box of all time was a Roy Rogers lunchbox and it had Trigger on the thermos. Man I was somebody. I was somebody as I climbed onto the bus totting my RR box with its sandwich, chips and twinkly (for some strange reason, the twinkle hardly ever made it to school). I see kids now have these plain LL Bean insulated "sacks". How boring, kids don't have the thrill of having Roy and his two six guns staring down on your peanut butter and jelly. Excuse me while I go fix a sandwich.

Well, unless you have been hiding under a rock, then you noticed that the weather has been particularly grim this season. We are coming to the close of the OLC season and we are sixty thousand kilometers behind where we were last year. IT REALLY DOESN'T MATTER BECAUSE WE DO THIS FOR THE LOVE OF FLYING, don't we? We'll get Wank – er -- I mean, Warner Springs, next year, damn it!

Speaking of flying, Al Santilli's Libelle, Alpha Sierra, is back in the air. After much work, Billy Hill Ops tested it for Colleen and I and then turned it over to us. Colleen took it up three times (thrice) last Sunday and the smile on her face was priceless. It is a great feeling after so much work to see it back in the air where it belongs.

Meanwhile, Mark Hawkins has just acquired a nice new-to-him Ventus b with 16.6 tips. And Tim Hawkins (no relation, other than to Mary

– too many Hawkinses, no not really) has begun to score miles for the club on the OLC. Note too that Mike Carris has been scoring lots of OLC miles for the club, pedaling his RS-15 around the Moriarty sky to a better effect than anybody else has every flown one of these homebuilts. This one was built by somebody else but carefully prepared by him, to good effect.

On a serious note, Don Kawal just informed the board that Bob Hausner, former ASC Club member, passed away last spring in Santa Fe. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the Hauser Family. For those who didn't know Bob, he has been a member since 1990. He owned and flew a Ventus 2b. Also of note, was that he was a navigator aboard B-26s and flew missions into Germany during WW II, you remember that war it was in all the newspapers [*some of us were under it—Ed.*]. The Soaring Club was represented by Earl Fain at the funeral.

On the up side, however, Spenser Guillory is set to graduate from the Albuquerque Police Academy on the 19th of September. Spenser will be hitting the streets immediately as one of Albuquerque's finest. Jimmy Wier and I are planning to make the graduation just to see Spenser's shaved head. While we have a sadness in our heart for Bob Hausner, we have a joy and pride in Spenser's accomplishment.

And speaking of accomplishments, recently Cliff Goldman soloed. Stan Roeske said Cliff wasn't paying attention to anything he had to say so he climbed out of the plane in disgust and said "get out of here!" Cliff thought that meant to take it around the air patch. So my advice is to clear out of the pattern as we have another intrepid airman sharing (or stealing) the lift.

If you have been checking our website, and reading my e-mails, then you know that Billy Hill has been putting together a soaring road [*Road? –Ed*] trip to Pagosa Springs. The trip

is for three days of soaring [*That's better.-Ed*] and fellowship. If you haven't figured out where Pagosa Springs is, it is 204 miles from Moriarty Airport. You go through Espanola, travel past Ghost Ranch and Chama, and there you are! There already are several folks who have indicated that they want to go, but it is imperative that you let Billy or me know, if you haven't already, if you are planning to go, so that we can ensure Pagosa Springs is ready for us.

If you look around you will see that our club 1-26 is sporting bright tail numbers on the tail. We can thank Doctor Bob Woods for spending two days make her look presentable. Next year we are hosting the 1-26 national contest again and she will look so good on the grid. Who wants to team with me? Thanks Doc!

Bill Hallett stepped up to the plate and has taken on the task of maintaining our club soda machine. For all the time I have been a club member, Bob Knight has held the job of our Soda King. Bob did a bang up job and it was time for him to turn over the keys. Next time you see Bob thank him for his good work and dedication to our well being! Now get out and to the club and fly, but as always fly safe.

The Ying and Yang of flying

By Billy Hill

[Connie Buenafe is the latest subject in the neat series of interviews with Moriarty pilots that Diana Roberts has been publishing on the club web page. In her interview Connie describes how she is again taking power lessons and along the way she compared flying gliders with flying power. She said that power is "like driving a really complicated truck. It's just different."

Well, that led our own Z to wax philosophical in this issue instead of his usual analysis about safety.-Ed.]

As regards Connie's comparison of a powered aircraft to a truck, allow me to offer another point of view.

If one flies more than just a motored aircraft or for that matter just an un-motored one, it is possible to achieve a balance within one's flying as there is both a different mind set as well as a different discipline involved in flying either type of aircraft.

Those flying machines endowed by their makers with engines are very linear in nature in that they are best flown by strict adherence to the numbers ascribed to their flight characteristics. Which is not to say that a sailplane can be safely flown outside its design envelope.

There are even those airplanes which, because of their very shape, seem to be an affront if not an assault on the very molecules of air through which they fly. An excellent example of that is the Cessna Caravan. It seems to say: "Out of my way!" "Step aside!" "Coming through!"

Whereas sailplanes are somewhat ethereal in nature by virtue of their design. They are flown because of the environment rather than in spite of it. They cleave the atmosphere in such a manner that the molecules of air are gently caressed and are more than willing to allow their passage. They leave in their wake not a roar, but a whisper.

In flying both types of aircraft, a pilot comes to appreciate the differences between engine driven, (linear in both thought and action), and engineless aircraft, (gracefulness of thought, movement and action.)

Motorless flight is creative in nature as it allows for a melding of machine, pilot and the environment through which it flies. The sky becomes a pallet on which abstract strokes are made by the sailplane and pilot as they wend their way from point to point.

A sailplane pilot must read the subtle signs provided by Mother Nature much in the same way an Indian tracker looks for those clues which will lead him to his prey. Atmospheric conditions, which can be ever so minuscule, can change in such a fashion as to go almost unnoticed. The most successful of sailplane pilots will read these changes and react accordingly. They are in sync with the conditions and will fly fast and far. The unwary pilot who allows his mind and machine to merely meander will miss the almost imperceptible nuances which are there for him to read, interpret and then and follow.

Although some powered aircraft do handle much like a truck -- minus power steering -- there is still a certain satisfaction to be derived from nailing those numbers associated with said flying machine. For example, the net result of a well flown (by hand), instrument procedure is to break out of the overcast and

find the approach lights beckoning. The most satisfying culmination of that flight is a landing in which contact between machine and macadam is all but imperceptible.

So, then what is the connection between powered flight and motorless flight? It is a smooth economy of motion. It is an almost Tai-Chi like movement of hands and feet within the cockpit. A deliberate movement which says I know what I am about to do and why. It is focus of thought on an almost subliminal basis. It is flying in this manner which creates the interface between the two types of aircraft and thus becomes the Yin and Yang of flying.

Flying sans airplane? *By John Farris*

I had always wanted to fly without an airplane and finally got the chance on a recent trip to Denver, CO, with daughter and seven-year-old grandson. We all took turns flying in a vertical wind tunnel -- they call it indoor skydiving.

We got a good briefing before we actually flew. First we saw a video that explains the basics and safety. Then our instructor demonstrated the proper positions, and the hand signals he will use to communicate, since it is too noisy in the wind tunnel to hear even someone shouting. Next we put on special coveralls that have lots of handles so that the instructor can help us as needed. We also wore a helmet, goggles and earplugs. They can vary the wind speed, but it is typically about 120 mph. The instructor enters the wind tunnel first and demonstrates how he can control his going up and down, rotate and then stop, be motionless, etc. He can fly face down or face up. He does flips & other acrobatics. His control is truly amazing.

The technique for beginners is to gently push yourself into the air stream, face down, and let the force of the wind hold you up. This is easier said than done and your instructor usually has to help you. You find that your smallest body movements result in your moving in some direction. For instance just changing your head position will cause your entire body to move. And flexing your hand can cause you to spin around. Controlling your position was not at all easy.

I purchased the optional video of our flights. The video proves that I need a lot more practice. My daughter did best, my grandson next best, and I was last. However, we all had a great time. My two new knees caused me no problems.

Many of their customers are skydivers who want to practice their moves in the air at less expense & with less risk. For them, it is like a simulator. We saw one skydiver practicing with our instructor, and he got better & better.

If interested, call 303-768-9000 or look at <http://www.skyventurecolorado.com/> or www.skyventurecolorado.com. I understand that there is also a commercial vertical wind tunnel in Las Vegas, NV.

If you get a chance try it for yourself. It is a blast.

The ghosts of Hobbs *By Renny Rozzoni*

After my trip to Marfa in April, 2008, for the dedication of the 15th National Landmark of Soaring, I wrote about my experiences in Towlines. Marfa was the site for the 12th World Soaring Championships in 1970 – actually at the old Marfa, WWII Army Air Field (AAF). George Moffat the world's winner that contest, described that it was like to fly out of Marfa was like in the 60's and 70's....

Now, some of you may not know this, but 25 years ago the 18th World Soaring Championships were held in Hobbs, NM at what is now known as the Hobbs Industrial Airpark. I missed the 1970 Worlds at Marfa (as I was already in the Army!), but I did get to attend the 1983 Worlds.

It is really hard to believe that we have reached the 25th anniversary of that famous contest. It was only the 2nd Worlds held in the US and it featured some of the real legends of soaring including: George Moffat, Dick Butler, Karl Striedeck, Ray Gimney, Eric Mozer and Tom Beltz. Contest organizers included: Judge Hal Lattimore, Competition Director, Jack Gomez, Contest Manager and Bernald Smith and Big John Brittingham as Deputy Directors. The US pilots did very well with George Moffat and Dick Butler finishing 4th and 7th respectively in the Open Class. In

the Standard Class Tom Beltz finished 2nd and Eric Mozer finished 5th. In the 15 Meter Class Karl Striedeck finished 2nd and Ray Gimney finished 10th.

This US performance was noteworthy, considering that the tough field of 109 competitors included such famous soaring pilots as: Ingo Renner (winner of the Open Class) from Australia, Bruno Gantenbrink and Klaus Holighaus (of Schempp-Hirth fame) from W. Germany, George Lee from the UK, Leonardo Brigliadori from Italy and Laurens Goudriaan from South Africa. If you want to read more about the contest you can read the excellent contest report, written by Doug Lamont, on the SSA website. You can find it under "Sailplane Racing" and then "US Team" and then under "Team Archive." The URL is: <http://www.ssa.org/UsTeam/adobe%20pdf/1983%20WGC.pdf>.

Held at what remained of the Hobbs AAF, and a few remnants of that WWII, B-17 training base remained when I visited during the contest site in 1983. You can see what the base looked like in 1943 in the photo. (For those who haven't flown at Hobbs, the ramp that has been site of many gliding contests can be seen between the runway and the hut encampment, which is all long gone.) Back at the time of the Worlds, one of the large WWII hangars was used by the gliders. The National Soaring Foundation hangar, still there today, was being used during the contest. There were also large crowds of spectators, many RVs, tents, the flags of the many countries participating. And there were

many famous glider pilots that I had only read about. It was a great experience and one that I will always remember....

As it was in 1983, when I return to Hobbs these days and visit the old Army airfield I always find it a very nostalgic experience. The large WWII hangar was torn down a few years ago and of course the tents, RVs and crowds are gone, but you can still see the concrete slabs and a few remnants where the buildings from WWII once stood.

If you visit the Hobbs Industrial Airpark and stop for a moment and quietly listen to the wind, you can almost hear the sound of a glider passing overhead in a high speed finish. If you carefully listen a bit longer you may even hear the distant roar of those 1,200 HP, radial engines on a B-17 and the murmur of voices from a time long ago. The world has changed many times since WWII, and even since the 18th World Soaring Championships in 1983, but the ghosts of Hobbs remain.

The next time you are in Hobbs, stop by the SSA office, which is next to the field, and then visit the old AAF. Turn off your engine and take a walk around. You never know what you may hear.....

