

# Towlines

The Newsletter of the Albuquerque Soaring Club

December 2009

**Happy Christmas, Chanukah, or whatever else takes your wish!  
And may the coming year produce the biggest, fattest thermals at  
regular intervals ...**

## President's Notes

*By Bob Hudson*

Ah, the glamour of being the Albuquerque Soaring Club President. As I type this I am sitting in our Club House freezing as I wait for a plumber to show to fix our heater. It appears the heater control box died recently and with that death we are not able to maintain a pilot light. (Translation ...no heat.) In order to keep our pipes from freezing we had to stick a space heater under the sink in the main room as well as place a space heater in the bathroom. The plumber spent Monday afternoon trying to locate a control box for the heater while I sat with Terry Bryan and Robert Mudd in the Club House with the temperature quickly heading south. After seven hours of cold soaking, it was determined that the control box procured was defective and so that brings me to day two of babysitting the icebox. With any luck we will have the heater fixed within my lifetime.

Now to the news. On Saturday, the 5<sup>th</sup> of December, we hosted the new State Aviation Director, David Ploeger, with a tour of the Club and the Airport. We had a cadre of Club members to assist with the venture and it turned out to be very beneficial. David was able to get a Grob flight in as well as receive a wealth of information about who we are and what goes on with the Moriarty Airport.

The bottom line is that I found our new Aviation Director to be really "tuned in" to the needs of New Mexico. Additionally, in the short time he has been aboard, he has become really knowledgeable about the shortcomings of the system (our cross wind runway, architecture shortfalls, FAA shortcomings, etc.). We have an Aviation Director that will work for the State which makes us the beneficiaries of his progress.

In other news, our Vice President, Connie Buenafe, has joined the ranks of the unemployed...she retired. Good on you, Connie. Maybe we will see her more often out at the air patch.

Now, by the time you read this we will have a new Board of Directors. (See the report elsewhere in this *Towlines*.) As the outgoing President [*and the incoming one-Ed.*] I will say in advance that the Club has weathered a good year. The first item of note is that we had no major incidents or accidents. Anytime you can state that then you know we are doing something right. Second we gained eleven new members (of course we lost a couple in the process, but that is life). Third we are in decent shape financially, even though we had some large expenses, like adding a trailer for the Grob and rebuilding the engine on 10Z. (For more information on these subjects, you need to attend the Gala, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February.)

And that brings me to the Gala (February 6<sup>th</sup>). We are already deep into planning this year's event so sit down right now and mark this down on your calendar and remember when we ask for your RSVP, respond promptly with a yea or a nay, but it would really be nice for a yea.

Well, that's my column for December. In closing your ACS Board would like to say that it has been a pleasure serving you this year and we wish you a most Merry Christmas and a Happy Chanukah. Fly safe and stay warm. El Prez.

## **Annual Meeting-12 December 2009**

The annual meeting has come and gone. Of course in order to make this a successful meeting, and according to our bylaws, we needed to have a quarter of our regular members present to reach the required quorum. Well, we had 28, or roughly fifty percent present, so we had our quorum.

The first item on the agenda was an introduction of all present so that new and old alike could put a face to a name. Next, I presented financials. The bottom line is we have over forty-four thousand dollars in our checking account. (I will post the balance sheet to our website so that you can explore our financials in more detail.) Our total income (30 Nov) was \$75,180. Our total expenses were \$87,065 for a net income of minus \$11,884. What drove the negative number? It was mostly the expense of \$25,000 to overhaul the engine on 10Z. However the point here is that despite this hit, financially your Club remains in decent shape.

In regard to our membership: we started 2009 with 58 Regular and 73 Associate Members for a total of 131 Members and we ended 2009 with 65 Regular and 57 Associate Members for 122 Member. We shrunk a bit, mostly as a result of non-active, primarily out-of-state, associates ending membership, but we added eleven new members!

We discussed and voted on two issues; first should the Club rejoin the SSA? After several comments and a unanimous vote, it was determined that we would remain a non SSA Club at this time.

Second, we discussed whether we should change the name of how we “score” on the OLC from Albuquerque Soaring to something else? At the end of the lively discussion, it was decided to stick with Albuquerque Soaring.

The last order of business was the election of board members and the appointment of club officials.

The results of the elections were:

Bob Hudson, President

Connie Buenafe, Vice President

Mary Hawkins, Treasurer

Mark Hawkins, Secretary

Bill Hill and Mark Mocho, Directors at Large

The Club Officials that were appointed were:

Chief Tow Pilot: Tim Hawkins

Chief Instructor: Stan Roeske

Operations Officer: Diana Roberts

Maintenance Officer: Clay Phillips

Towlines Editor: Howard Banks

Website Editor: Brian Resor

Tow Pilot Scheduler: John Farris

Insurance Manager: Don Kawal to transfer the function over to Renny Rozzoni

Club House Maintenance: Mitch Hudson

Safety Officer: Billy Hill

## **Don Kawal**

The most notable change in the line up of club officers is that Don Kawal is working his way out of his job as insurance manager. At the Annual Meeting he managed to finagle a way to get Renny Rozzoni to step up as his replacement. This will take place after a period during which Don will show Renny the ropes – and pass on his know-how.

One notable achievement by Don is that the Club's insurance premium has gone down (yes, down) under his leadership. In his typically self-effacing way Don gives lots of the credit to the Club and its pro-safety policies: "The Club has done a hell of a job on safety", he says. But he also says that it is important for the insurance contact in the club to "know the risk" from such things as hosting a contest (eg, the 1-26ers this summer), or from excursions using Club equipment to Taos.

He also warned Renny that one of the biggest tasks is getting the necessary data for the insurance provider from Club tow pilots and instructors. But, he says: "I have learned a few tricks!" Now he plans to pass them on to Renny.



*Don explains to Renny that this insurance lark can be a bit tricky*

## **'Twas the night before Christmas**

*By W. G. Hill*

It's Christmas Eve. The weather in Salt Lake City is the pits. I look out the window at my passengers as they board the aircraft. Some have a look of apprehension because flying makes them nervous. Some appear to be unhappy because they find flying from point A to point B very stressful. All have been "Weather Warned" because Salt Lake City, as a final destination, looks very much in doubt.

Even knowing this, a reassuring smile spreads across my face and those passengers who look up at me return the smile, albeit with a clear measure of apprehension.

Conditions on the inbound leg leave the unprotected portions of the aircraft with a veneer of ice. The turbulence is moderate and at times seems to exceed that value. The ice is slinging off the props and smacking into the sides of the Brasilia like some demented demon demanding entry.

The autopilot has been acting up and because of that, it is deferred until maintenance can look at it. It's my leg, so I hand fly the aircraft.

At seven hundred feet above the touchdown end of the runway, the countdown begins with its litany of "call outs" which lead to that critical point in space known as "minimums." Throughout the flight I have been cross checking the collection of gauges, dials, levers and switches which glare back at me and demand my undivided attention. As this segment of the flight continues to what I hope will result in a landing in Salt Lake City, my first officer backs up my cross checks and occasionally glances out the windscreen in search of the approach lights.. We hope they will eventually be seen which in turn will give us a reprieve from that ignominious bane of all pilots; the missed approach.

Long before being vectored to the final approach course, I turned to my first officer who is fresh out of initial operating experience (IOE), and reminded him; this is what all the training and time spent in the simulator is about. This is why we learned to be precise regarding our checklist usage and call-outs. This approach will test to the maximum our ability to function as a team. This ILS will be one that will require our utmost attention to detail as well as our situational and positional awareness.

Everything is where it should be, must be, if I expect the completion of the approach to culminate in a landing in Salt Lake City rather than our alternate destination.

"Five hundred to minimums," I state. The first officer responds with a litany of items indicating we are on speed, at the correct sink rate, gear down and we have a landing clearance from the tower operator.

One of the most important parts of my instrument scan is following the commands of the flight director while integrating the raw data displayed on the HSI. I continue my call-outs; four hundred, three hundred, two hundred to minimums.

As the hundred-foot hand of the altimeter, like the hand of a clock which says time is running out, ticks across that point two hundred above the landing surface, I say the one word which will, depending on the response of the first officer, either result in a missed approach or the continuation of this process. "Minimums," I chant. The First officer responds, "approach lights in sight."

Because my flying partner has spotted the approach lights, we are legal to continue descending yet another hundred feet. That gives the first officer just a bit over eight seconds to find the runway environment. I continue the dance by stating; "continue, one hundred to minimums."

By virtue of the regulations under which we fly, we are given yet another chance to complete our mission and get everyone on board back to Salt Lake City in time to celebrate Christmas.

The closer to the ground we get, the tighter the approach must be flown -- the vertical and horizontal information provided by the instrument landing system, the ILS, become narrower and narrower as we approach that point in space above the ground where we must see the landing surface or we must make our missed approach.

"Runway in sight, twelve o'clock," the first officer sings out. I can hear the relief in his voice.

When looking up at this point, there is a natural tendency to pull back slightly on the yoke which will almost guarantee a missed approach as one attempts the transition from head down and concentrating on the gauges to looking up at that which is on the other side of the windscreen. Yet another possibility is dropping below the glide slope which can result in premature ground contact. Because of this, I allowed myself the briefest of glances out, and then returned to my instrument scan for another second or so.

We had discussed all the permutations of this approach as well as the team work necessary for its successful completion. That included the possibility that the first officer might land the aircraft once the runway environment was in sight in the event that I was not comfortable with making the transition from instruments to visual conditions. Because of the manner in which we had briefed the approach, the first officer's left hand was poised below the power levers should I wish him to land the aircraft.

I look up and see the runway environment, feel comfortable with what I see, and say, "landing." I retard the power levers and ease the nose up so that the main wheels will be the first to embrace terra firma.

The Brasilia is a stiff legged old bird, so I trim off the pressure on the yoke in search of that sweet spot where there is little if any load on the elevator. Like a blind man who senses the presence of something solid, I know the "mains" are only inches off the ground. I continue to ease back on the yoke in order to hold the sweet spot and then, like Mary Lou Renton going for the gold, I stick the landing. A hint of a smile tugs at the corners of my mouth and I wonder if the passengers could feel our arrival.

We clear the runway, switch to the ground controller and make our way to the concourse. Visibility on the ramp is not nearly as good as that on the runway where the high intensity runway lighting system provides excellent visibility, albeit for only about eighteen hundred feet, that which was required for us to initiate the approach. The lights and silhouettes of much large aircraft loom out of the murk as we wend our way to the gate.

We are marshaled into our parking space by a ramper who looks a bit surprised to see us. I set the parking brake, flip off the seat belt sign and continue with the "shut down" flow. As I do this, I feel the tension drain from between my shoulder blades. At the same time I feel a sense of pride and accomplishment. All the years of flying and training are summed up in the culmination of this one moment.

The flight is almost an hour behind schedule. No matter, we have brought the passengers home for the holidays.

As my charges exit the aircraft, I can hear some of them telling the flight attendant to please thank the pilots. From my vantage point on the flight deck, I watch them deplane. Most are in a hurry to get out of the elements, and so they scurry into the concourse. An elderly couple turns and looks up in my direction. The wife mouths a, "thank you Captain," and the husband smiles and gives me a salute which of course I return.

It's been a long day, and it's not over yet. We have one more leg to fly which will result in an overnight in a strange town and in a bed not my own.

I feel badly that my crew will spend Christmas Eve away from their loved ones. None the less, I feel an immense sense of satisfaction. I'm content in the knowledge that all who boarded my aircraft did so because they were willing to put their trust in my judgment, skill, knowledge and ability.

I am the Captain.

## **Sundance Aviation**

*By Bob Hudson*

Unless you have been living under a rock, you would have noticed that Sundance Aviation has leased one of our tow planes due to an unfortunate prop strike to the CallAir. This incident has prompted some discussion among ASC members about the synergy between the Albuquerque Soaring Club and Sundance Aviation.

One thing we need to be thankful for is the fact that we have a fulltime commercial soaring operation here at Moriarty. It was through Sundance that many of us got our introduction to soaring. (I took my first glider ride from Sundance, with Jimmy Weir as my pilot, while attending an Air Force school at Kirtland AFB, in 1996.)

Sundance allows us the capability to fly seven days a week. It is through Sundance that we get our fuel to operate our tow planes and we can get our flight evaluations without having to pay for a traveling examiner. When you consider these three items alone, you can imagine the consequences if we were to lose Sundance at our airfield. First we lose our ability to fly any day we desire. To fly during a weekday, you would have to arrange your own tow and what if no tow pilots were available?

On the issue of a flight evaluation, you probably won't need one after the initial (unless you are adding ratings), but for the pilot getting their glider pilot rating, you would have to travel to a flight examiner or pay to have one come here ... and they don't do this for free, as you know.

Lastly, the fuel. We used to have our own fuel. This meant somebody had to monitor the supply, order the fuel and pay the bills. Then there is the issue of the maintenance of the tanks, a very huge liability that is a potential "bomb" (no pun intended) waiting to explode. Okay, we wouldn't probably go that route, but who would take over our fuel? If the city took it over then we would have to await city employees to arrive if the pumps malfunctioned and then there is the issue of pricing being controlled by non-aviation agencies who are more interested in City financial matters than running a remote fueling operation.

But wait, what if another FOB took over, a power flight school for instance? How long do you think we could operate in a close, read friendly, relationship when they will want to park their student aircraft where we tie down? And what about having student pilots having to go around because gliders are launching or landing? We do not want to see a large power training operation at Moriarty.

So what is the point of my rambling? It is just this, I am thankful that we have a soaring partner at Moriarty Airport in Sundance aviation. As Spock said, let's hope they "live long and prosper!" Enough said.

## **Another year over**

May your Ed. claim a small indulgence to thank all his contributors, without whom this newsletter would never appear. Notable examples are, of course, El Prez (Le Colonel), who puts up with all sorts of abuse, and our esteemed safety officer, Sir William Hill, whose words save lots of us from otherwise imminent disaster.

Below is a little reminder that eventually the weather will move from frigid wave flying for the very brave to nice summer soaring.





*Final glide at Logan during Region 9 this summer. Because lift started late – so did launches, which sometimes led to long, relatively slow, final glides. This is HL taken by the passenger in Alfonso Ossorio’s DG 500.*

## *ASC Operations Schedule*

<b>Date</b>	<b>OPS 1</b>	<b>OPS 2</b>	<b>Instructor</b>	<b>Tow Pilot</b>
Dec 19 Saturday	RESOR B	HARE J	COLLINS A	TICHY T/
Dec 20 Sunday	PALA A	EKDAHL C		WADSWORTH H/
Dec 26 Saturday	ROZZONI R	REED R		WRIGHT R/
Dec 27 Sunday	CUMIFORD Jr. J	MORRISON L		Bryan T/
Jan 2 Saturday	HAWKINS My	BUENAFE C		BUSS P/
Jan 3 Sunday	Sapp J	BOYCE J		HAWKINS T/
Jan 9 Saturday	OKANDAN M	Cooper S		Jenson K/
Jan 10 Sunday	AIKEN G	STOLL F		HILL W/
Jan 16 Saturday				STEVENSON D/
Jan 17 Sunday				TICHY T/
Jan 23 Saturday				WRIGHT R/
Jan 24 Sunday				Bryan T/
Jan 30 Saturday				BUSS P/
Jan 31 Sunday				HAWKINS T/
Feb 6 Saturday				WADSWORTH H/
Feb 7 Sunday				HILL W/
Feb 13 Saturday				Jenson K/
Feb 14 Sunday				STEVENSON D/
Feb 20 Saturday				TICHY T/
Feb 21 Sunday				WADSWORTH H/
Feb 27 Saturday				WRIGHT R/
Feb 28 Sunday				Bryan T/