

Air Sailing News



Editor: Eric Norris

ASI web site: <http://www.airsailing.org/>

Winter/Spring 2010

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After the Work Party 2009—Bear Prepares to Strike

Come Join Us April 17 for Work Day 2010!

ASI Spring Cleaning Success!

By Cindy Donovan

As Stew Crane put it, the contributions made by 50+ volunteers the weekend of April 18th “exhibit the highest in a sense of volunteerism - which describes the entire operations and maintenance of Air Sailing - a formula that has seen it grow from a spark of an idea in the late 60's to the 40 plus year volunteer success it is today.”

It was a fun, satisfying kind of day. And I don't just mean the great lunch with Neita's team putting the food on the table or the financial support for the hamburgers from Tom Dinsmore or the labor value in excess of \$10,000 to our operational budget. As Stew puts it: “It is “That” day each year that no one wants to end, the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, VISTA and all the other “Do Good-corps” things you can imagine, rolled into one.”

Many thanks to each and every attendee for their energy, time and enthusiasm. And if you weren't there this year, we hope you will be able to join the fun April 17, 2010!

Lunch:

Neita, MaryAnn Read, Patty Haley, Rosemary

Thompson, Tiffany Prather, Angie Bishop

Improve & Maintain Facility:

Move Tool Shed: Dave Volkmann, Daniel Volkmann, Mike Schneider, and multitude of movers!

Fill runway cracks: Rich Miller, Greg Herold, Stew Crane, Taylor Phillips, David Ellens, Bob Spielman

Remove NSA trailer: NSA team.

Battery and Generator maintenance: Tiffany Prather

Hanger Door Lubrication: Bob Spielman, Mark Montague, Brett Gibbons

Add markers and repair to runway 17 fence: Peter Neumann, Frank Schmoeckel

First Aid kit update: Fred Fricke and Rich Miller

Fix fan in battery room: Rick Walters

Golf Carts: Bob Spielman

Hang the projector screen: Roger Harris, Greg Herold, John Boyce, Rob Stone

Landscape:

Irrigation system - Zone repair: John Boyce, Matt Herron

Trees: Fertilize, treat trees for scale and beetle infestations, clear weeds: Doug Grey, David Prather, Peter Neumann and Roger Harris. Watering: David P., Neita Montague, Matt Herron, Frank Schmoeckel, David and Tiffany Prather.

Tighten and anchor play set: "Rich Miller, Greg Herold

New to Air Sailing? Would you like to go for a ride in a sailplane, or learn how to fly? Call Lee Edling at 775-722-9188.

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Facilities:	Lee Edling

Nevada Soaring Association

A club operating at Air Sailing that offers low-cost soaring for members. It also provides introductory rides, instruction, BFRs, a cross-country safari, land out training, encampments, overnights, the Gerlach Dash, and a guest membership program. Contact: Bob Spielman, 250 River Bend Dr, Reno, NV 89523, 775 560-2406, thudpilot1@msn.com

Air Sailing Membership

New members, changes of address, lost members coming home... Send your personal information and check to:

Ty White			\$ 50.00
ASI Membership	Donation (Tax Deductible)	+	
41600 Marigold Drive	TOTAL		_____
Fremont, CA 94539			

Use of Mode C Transponders

The potential conflict between gliders and commercial air traffic near Reno has increased with the growth of commercial jet traffic into Reno-Tahoe Airport (RNO) during the past few years. PASCO (Pacific Soaring Council, Inc.) emphasizes that glider pilots operating in the Reno area must be alert for all air traffic arriving and departing RNO.

Transponder signals are received by Traffic Collision Avoidance Systems (TCAS) on board commercial aircraft as well as by Air Traffic Control (ATC) Radar. By ATC Letter of Agreement, gliders in the Reno area can transmit on the 0440 transponder code in the blind without establishing radio contact with Reno Approach Control.

PASCO recommends, and Air Sailing endorses, that gliders operating cross country, within 50 nm of Reno-Tahoe Airport, install and use a Mode C altitude encoding transponder.

Reduce trash piles: Bob Spielman, Roger Harris, Lee Edling, Rob Stone

Clear Weeds next to runway, in the dog run and tie down area: Brett Gibbons, Taylor Phillips, Diane Horn, Fred Fricke, Cindy Donovan, Kurt and Ian Redinbangh

Paint:

Hanger Office wooden rails: Barbara Morgan, Diane and Dick Horn

Windmill fence: touch up: Jeannine Herron

Clubhouse doors: Rosemary Thompson, Cindy Donovan

Hanger guide line: Stew Crane

Clean:

Bath house clean up: Herb Robins

Light fixtures: Patty Haley

Furnace room: Dan Altstatt

Gazebo and Shade Structure: Gary Phillips

Hanger: Bob Spielman, Rolf Peterson, Brett Gibbons, Varian, Mary Ann Read, Will Lumpkin, David Ellens

House Trailers: Patty Haley

Trophy case: Tiffany Prather

Club room windows: Jeannine Herron

Blue tow plane: David Ellens, Frank Schmaeckel

General Support:

Errands and announcements: Bob McKay, Mary Ann Read, Rosemary and Dale Thompson

Photographers: Dale Thompson, Lee Edling

Rob Stone Recognized by SSA

By Neita Montague

Rob Stone was awarded the **MOST ACTIVE INSTRUCTOR AWARD FOR REGION 11 in 2009** by the Soaring Society of America. This award is determined by instructor who submits the most A<B<C and Bronze badges during the year. It was awarded at the SSA convention in Little Rock though Stoney wasn't able to attend.

President's Message

By Dick Horn

Welcome to another great soaring year at Air Sailing!

After 5 dedicated years as ASI President, Ty White tricked me into taking his job so he could actually spend more time soaring. We owe Ty our thanks and know he will continue to be an active member of the Board of Trustees. I am also pleased to say that Pete Casti has joined the Board. We really appreciate Pete taking on this additional volunteer activity for ASI.

We had an active year in 2009 with the regular camps, student instruction, Sports Class contest, and the Libelle gathering. Speaking of student instruction; be sure to congratulate Rob Stone on receiving the SSA's "Most Active Instructor" Award for our region. Let's all schedule our next Flight Review with Rob so that 2010 will be a repeat. Or go to any of the other instructors at ASG so he has some competition.

And speaking of awards; be sure to congratulate Neita Montague as the Woman's Soaring Pilots Association President and their "Distinguished Service" Award from the SSA. We look forward to the WSPA Women Soaring Seminar at Air Sailing, 17-23 July.

After 20 years of flying at Air Sailing it continues to amaze me how much work it takes to keep our flight operations running & safe, tow planes & facilities maintained, various camps and events organized. All this work is done by a small group of dedicated members. If you are interested in helping out in any aspect of keeping Air Sailing going please contact any Camp/Event manager, Air Sailing or NSA Board member, we can always use the help.

As a volunteer operation we are dependent on each pilot, crew member and visitor to know what is expected of them as users of the gliderport. These expectations are written down in the Air Sailing Policies & Procedures document available on our website as well as in the clubhouse. While common sense and your pilot in command responsibilities need to guide your safe operations, our policies & procedures provide Air Sailing specific guidelines and information that is intended to foster orderly and safe activities at the gliderport. Our Operations Manager, Rob Stone has organized these materials and created a very visible "Pilot's Briefing Station" in the clubhouse. Before your first flight of each year, you are required to read this information and certify compliance in the logbook provided. Please help Rob out by proactively completing this before your next flight, if you have not already done so. Also don't be afraid to remind your fellow pilots of this requirement. The tow pilots are fully authorized

to refuse to give you a tow until you have met this requirement. Let's all help each other keep our gliderport operations safe.

If winter weather has kept you out of a glider, take that first flight or two with an instructor. Combine it with a flight review if you are due soon and get it out of the way early.

Hope to see you all at Air Sailing!



Culvert Work

2010 Operations

By Rob Stone

Spring is rapidly approaching and the activity around Air Sailing is starting to pick up. We are looking forward to another great soaring season.

The events schedule has come together nicely, and is posted on the ASI website. Participants are already starting to send in their applications for both the Thermal and Cross Country Camps scheduled in June. The Sports Class Contest scheduled in July has been sanctioned by SSA and posted on their website. The Contest Director will be JJ Sinclair who was last year's winner. With several contestants already signed up, we are pleased that it looks like the Air Force Academy will send a group to compete for the first time in several years. Also scheduled in July, is the WSPA Seminar hosted by Neita Montague. It is going to be a busy and activity filled year at Air Sailing with lots of requirements for volunteer help.

Significant changes in our flight operations this year include the **no exception** requirement to have radio contact with the tow pilot for all takeoffs. This, of course, is in response to the tragic accident at Crazy Creek Air Adventures last fall resulting in the loss of Hal Chouinard and tow pilot Robert Boylan. Hal was a great supporter of ASI and a former winner of

our sports class contest. We will miss him.

Another change you'll notice is the tow line which will now be set up with a Schweizer ring. Weak links with tost rings will be available and, hopefully, plentiful, but it is recommended that you have a backup in your ship for use on retrieves. Just in case.

When you walk into the clubhouse for the first time this year you will notice that a station has been set up that includes a bulletin board and podium with a read file. Take some time to catch up with the Operations Manual for 2010 and sign it off, also there is a short document that details PASCO's recommended communication procedures. You must read and sign a waiver for the 2010 soaring year.

After March of this year, those of you that still have a paper license FAA license will be required to have your license reissued in plastic. Look on the FAA website for details but it is virtually painless to swap it out.

Lastly, we always recommend your first flight of the year be with an instructor. We are blessed that for the first time in years to have an ample supply of instructors at Air Sailing that are also available for upgrade training or to give you a thorough flight review if needed. We urge you take advantage of our instructor corps. While flying at Air Sailing, be prepared to show that you are current for a flight review **and** are in compliance with the gliderport's insurance requirements. Have a great soaring season.



Wave Flying

By Bob Spielman

This had to be one of my greatest 1-26 flights ever. It's not my longest flight as I've flown further. And it's not my highest flight as I've gone much higher. So why is it one my greatest? Because I had a chance to beat Hangman (Doug Levy) in the

Western Diamond Division Sweepstakes with only a month left to do it.

Used to be I could count on Hangman doing 6 flights of about 300 sm average or 1800 sm in the sweepstakes as he did in 2007. Then in 2008 he flew 2130 sm or 355 sm average in the OLC. This year he flew 2243 sm or 374 sm average in the Sweepstakes through the end of August. How do you beat that? I was 273 miles short with one and a half months to go to the end of the Sweeps and I knew Doug didn't like to fly wave. I guess I'm too competitive and he's a friend of mine but I wanted to win the Sweeps once.

I'd like to take you on a wave flight so you can try it someday. It seems easy to me now but it wasn't when I started. I had no instructor and only "Exploring the Monster" book to guide me. I flew along with Kempton Izuno from Minden and we learned by trial and error.

The evening before the National Weather Service in Reno said that mountain wave was improbable. Also I was looking for wave as an all day event so I could put on some miles but you never know till you've tried it and I drove to Minden early where I have #555 for the winter.

First, getting ready. My cockpit is FULL. Oxygen, Volkslogger, Garmin 296 GPS for backup logger and flight panel in case I inadvertently back into clouds, blanket, water, food, extra batteries, extra radio, camera, and parachute.

For clothes I wear Baffin Bay boots with electric socks and Thermacare pads on my toes. Then 4 layers of clothes on the top and bottom. Mittens, hat, sunglasses, cannula, and ski mask. I put on my layered bottoms until I get the glider out to the runway or I'll overheat and then I put on the tops and boots.

Mike Moore in the Pawnee tows me through rotor and it's always rough but I'm off tow low at 6700' (2000' agl) as there's good lift, and it's 9:00, later than I want, and I make a couple of circles for the logger and it feels like a good day. As soon as it smooths out I know I'm out of rotor and in wave and I'm going up 400 fpm and then it's easy, just stay in front of the clouds - lennies - and head northwest and southeast to follow the valley. The best wave is usually from 25 miles south of Minden to Reno and I want to make my track as long as possible. Sometimes where there is a gap in the mountains, as west of Reno, the wave gets weak and it's hard to cross the gap.

The jet is overhead and the wind is 270 degrees. Northbound I'm going 320 degrees and 70K and southbound it's 150 degrees and 90-120K but I'm

crabbing about 40 degrees to maintain that course and that's really hard to get used to watching out the side window instead of the front. I have my transponder on and I'm talking to Reno Approach and they've been terrific considering I'm flying north and south very close to their localizer. I'm west of Reno now and I'm sinking out and I think I'm too far downwind so I turn west to try to get into the leading edge of the wave and my groundspeed is 15K at 13000'. On another flight I was doing 8K and Reno Approach asked if I was hovering. The lift band is pretty narrow today and I'll have to pay attention. It seems like a long time and sink is now zero and then I'm in 600fpm up.

Uh oh, Sheriff Jay country, and I push over to keep from busting through 18000'. Rob Stone and I lost several good flights a couple of years ago that Sheriff Jay took away from us because we went through 18000' and rightfully so. We really watch it close now and try not to go above 17500'. One problem is some of our loggers show higher than the altimeter, but that's no excuse. I'm happiest at 17500' and 100K and I can tell if the lift is weak as I have to take the bungee off the stick that helps me keep forward pressure.

We're fortunate to have so many good landing spots: Alpine County, Minden, Carson City, Reno, Stead, plus some others. And usually the Foehn Gap between the mountains and the valley will stay open and doesn't suddenly close in. Wave doesn't usually stop like thermals, it's continuous as long as you can stay on the leading edge and if there are clouds that's a great help. I've only had trouble one time when I was in good wave and suddenly there was nothing but massive sink and I went from 17000' to 12000' in about 2 minutes and I turned toward Carson City and in about 10 minutes I was 45 degrees to the runway at 50 feet in terrible turbulence and some guy called 911 and said there was a glider that was going to crash but I fooled him as I made it.

I call Reno and tell them that to conserve battery power I can either talk to them with the transponder off or squawk 0440 and turn the radio off and they've preferred the transponder to tell my position and altitude. I usually use a 17 amp hour battery but with the temperatures down to zero to minus 20 degrees the battery provides a lot less power. If the FAA requires us to have transponders this problem will have to be solved. I'm going to try a full size Concorde aircraft 27ah battery next

.The lift is best just east of Heavenly ski area and Mt Rose ski area. A Southwest 737 passes me about 500' high and ½ mile to my right and it looks like Reno Approach or Oakland center has vectored him around me. Lake Tahoe is gorgeous under my left

wing.

I'm still at 17500' and I'm keeping track of my mileage and I've got 300 miles assured and I've been airborne 5 hours now. My butt is sore and I wiggle around and put some negative Gs on to help. Wiggle, wiggle. It's also cold and I'm shivering a little. The clouds look like they're really dissipating now and I wonder if I can make one more roundtrip so I'm going to try it - no guts, no glory. It's 2:00 and the sun is getting lower and when I turn north it's very cold. I've got the blanket wrapped around my legs and my gloves on and I want to put on my ski mask but that's tough. I have to take off my headset, hat, cannula and sunglasses to do it and then reverse the procedure after I put the ski mask on but I find I have no ears to put the cannula hoses behind so I fit it over my head and around my neck. My water has ice in it. I'm at the place of greatest lift so I put the bungee back on and watch out so Sheriff Jay doesn't get me.

Then I'm southbound and I'm going into the headwind and doing only 26K or 1/2 mile a minute and I've been used to 7 miles per minute in the 737, 8 miles/min in the F-4 and 9 miles/min in the F-105 and this is agonizingly slow.

I consider putting the Volkslogger battery under my clothes but I don't think I have any body heat to spare since I'm shivering already. My main battery is down to 10.5 volts and my radio won't work unless I turn off my transponder and when I get close to Reno I let approach know I'm still here. My feet are starting to get cold after 6 hours. The Thermacare pads really helped but are running out and it's time to turn on my electric socks while I try to get an extra 100 miles. I figure every leg and think I've got 370 miles made when I get to Minden and I'm going southeast to try to get a few extra miles.

That's enough, it's 6+30 hours and I'm cold, my butt's tired and I'm ready for a Pepsi. I eat a little and try to hydrate before before landing but my water is solid ice. I'm 20 miles SE of the airport and hit 800fpm up and then I'm sinking again and at 12.5 miles I'm at 13000' with 500 fpm down and a groundspeed of 25K and I head west toward the mountains instead of NW toward the field to try to get into lift. It gets rough so I'm in rotor and I'm up and down so it looks better but I never hit decent lift and then I get lower and lower and wonder if I can make the field and when I should turn toward it. Finally I go for it and at 4 miles I'm at 2300' agl and 500fpm down and it's going to be close. Then I figure I'll make the first 1000' of the closest runway but when I get there I'm at 500' so with no speedbrakes I make a downwind and end up at my parking spot. No guts, no glory.

The Soaring Season has Begun

By Neita Montague

We had a bang up flying day yesterday, Saturday the 13th, with 43 tows! Lots of students were flying, plus several of us got current for the season. We even had visitors come out for a commercial ride: Kathy and Lani.

It was a warm and calm day, perfect for a high flight, pattern tows and rope breaks.

Seen out at ASI were Will, Alan and Terry, Erin, Billy, Linda and Larry, Frank, Lee, Chukar, Coot, Chris and his wife from Gerlach, Rand and his son who flew in in Rand's Beech-18, Charlie, Marye Anne, Mark and Neita, Peter and Lee. e was Gary and Mike and Austin and Doug and Stew and Tim! There were some new faces and perhaps I missed your name here.

Coot (Roger Harris) brought a DVD he made for Neita for her presentation at the end of February in Orlando, FL at the Women in Aviation Conference and we all watched it after a turkey dinner put on by NSA/Bob Spielman with several members bringing food to share. The talk will be the first in the WIA Conference history on soaring and called: "The Best Kept Secret in Aviation: Soaring" and is aimed at helping women learn about the sport and to get the word out about how inexpensive it is compared to power flying. So many people would like to fly but feel priced out of the market. ASI is one of the premier training facilities and offers, through NSA, a very affordable way to fly, learn or increase flying skills in a great and supportive community of flying enthusiasts.

It's time to come on out to the gliderport on warm days. Good for polishing up your landing skills, your rope breaks, your decision-making and a wonderful time to see your friends again at Air Sailing and get back into the groove of flying.

"Women in Aviation" Learns about Soaring

By Neita Montague

Hundreds of women pilots descended on Orlando for their yearly aviation convention. For the first time in its history the attendees will be able to see a presentation on soaring. Air Sailing members Neita Montague and Marti Klemm gave a talk on "The

Best Kept Secret in Aviation: Soaring!" to over 100 women.

Information about the SSA, the WSPA, ASI and NSA was in the PowerPoint presentation and literature on soaring was quickly snatched up after the question and answer period.

The presentation will be shown some time this summer at Air Sailing.

Air Sailing Happenings

By Lee Edling

Wow, here it is, 2010! Congratulations for making it this far!

What exciting things have been going on at Air Sailing? Since 27 September Air Sailing has been the home of the PASCO egg, the Region 11 capture trophy. I captured it from Williams on 11 September and then on 27 September from Minden.

Snow and rain have been dominate during this El Nino wet season. Air Sailing had about ten inches of snow on the ground for a month from the first week of December and it got down to minus 16 one night.

At the end of January I headed for Little Rock and spent Thursday at the SSA convention. An ice storm was forecast for Friday and I was at a motel six miles west of the convention center. Sure enough, about noon on Friday the roads were too slick to drive on and Saturday was the same, so I missed the last two days of the convention. Sunday the roads were good enough to try and I headed west on I-40 seeing many abandoned cars in the snow and ice along the way.

The ground was dry enough for us to fly on Saturday 13 February. Rand Siegfried flew his Beech 18 in and there was a great turnout. We had 43 tows with both tow planes working. Coot supervised repair of a culvert because we had a hole in the road. Then Chukar cooked a turkey and we ate into the dark. Many nice people brought side dishes and desserts.

On Valentine's Day, Chukar towed me to Tule Peak where I released at 8,700 feet. I never got over 9,500 feet and in the light wind the only lift I found was on the south side of Tule. Each time I tried the west side of Tule ridge, there was no lift and I had to turn back. Two eagles were sitting on a rock on the southeast ridge of Tule and they watched me for about two hours, then I headed towards Winnemucca Ranch Road to try to pick up wave. There was a nibble, but nothing usable. There were wave clouds high above western Nevada.

The weather was good enough for me to fly Blue

Tow to Stead on 24 February so it could go in for an annual.

I'm in favor of adding strobes to both of our tow planes. Dr. Robbins donated one strobe to us.

One of our members e-mailed that he is hooked on flying the DG-808 sailplane in Microsoft Flight Simulator X. Even though Microsoft has stopped development on its flight simulator, they continue to sell it. I recently purchased an add on for FSX, the Aerosoft F-16. It allows you to search soaring areas in style and with speed while you learn the terrain and look for contest turn points. The Aerosoft F-16 has a functional cockpit and you can click on switches and controls. It is very high resolution and has many skins (paint jobs and exteriors). A 700 plus page manual is included on the disc. There are videos on YouTube, just search for them by entering Aerosoft F-16.

Aerosoft also has a Discus you can purchase for FSX. You can buy the F-16 at Best Buy but I haven't seen the Discus at Best Buy. You can purchase and download them from the web site at www.aerosoft.com. The Discus is also on YouTube. Search for "FSX-Aerosoft Discus Glider X."

Michael Reid was one of the Libelle pilots here last summer and he gave a presentation at the SSA Convention on using Google Maps for cross country planning. Here is his website: <http://soaringlab.blogspot.com/2010/01/cross-country-planning-tool-google-maps.html>.

Give it a look and maybe some of you can get us started on Google Maps and annotation for our area. He will have an article in SOARING soon.

An Easy Way to Blow Your Diamond Goal and Pick up the PASCO Egg at the Same Time

By Robert Stone

February 23rd 2009 was really nicely set up for a wave day, although it came together a little later in the day than I would have preferred. The big winds aloft announced an incoming winter storm, and there were not too many clouds getting in the way. I preflighted and then launched out of Air Sailing at 1:45 PM in the Nevada Soaring Association's SGS 1-26E, N2509H (669), with Bob "Chukar" Spielman towing in our club's Pawnee. A 300K task with three turnpoints in pursuit of my elusive Diamond Goal had been meticulously planned over the several months I have been waiting for a day like this.

Capturing the PASCO Egg for Air Sailing Gliderport (ASI) was well within the “doable” range as it was sitting only 50 miles away in Laurie Harden and Fred LaSor’s SoaringNV hanger at the Minden Airport. A sometimes pesky Colibri was tracking satellites like nobody’s business, and it coupled as advertised to my PDA running Glide Navigator II (GNII). The miles of wires supporting all those electronic things were stowed as neatly as possible in every nook and cranny. I am bundled up with three layers of clothing over the lower parts of me and four layers on the other parts. A blanket is draped over my shoulder. With three pair of heavy socks over thermal care patches encased in heavy winter boots, my perpetually cold feet were at least starting out pretty toasty. It could not have started more perfectly.

Taking off into the gathering big west wind, Chukar made a smooth downwind turn over ASI to gain altitude followed by a turbulence-induced abrupt rollout, and even though Chukar may disagree with me on this, I think I handled the resulting huge slack line just fine, thank you very much. I am still amazed how much a glider can turn a tow plane when that happens. Anyway, all was well and back under controlled as we headed southwest toward Stead where the clouds pointed to the primary wave. Soon, however, conditions forced me into a rare two-handed tow, but I’m sure we’ve all been in worse. We motored on, and as we approached the extended center line of the active runway at the Reno Airport, Chukar directed a frequency change to Reno Approach. My handheld radio connected to the ship’s antenna was Velcro(ed) securely on the right which required action by my right hand which meant leaving the flying to a less coordinated left hand. After a little bit of head down glance at the radio (just a second I swear), up I go, and down I push. Fortunately, after recovering to a semblance of the proper tow position the preset approach frequency was quickly found and I had only suffered a minor head bump but now I had to deal with a nastily askew hat and headset. Sometime you all might want to try the impossible task of securing and rearranging with one hand a headset, hat and all the seemingly and somehow attached stuff like sunglasses and oxygen cannula.

Oblivious to all that was going on in the cockpit 220 feet behind him, Chukar made the call to Reno and, of course we were assigned a discreet “squawk” and not the already preset standard of 0440 (for our area). Since NSA’s Pawnee will not be transponder-equipped until later this spring, this responsibility was delegated to me as the “towee”. First of all, now I have to remember the assigned code (c’mon fly & fight & remember an assigned transponder

code, geeze) and then try to set it (0416-now burnt into my memory I won’t soon forget it) in the barely lit digital window. The rapid fire radio transmissions with a busy controller went something like this “Are you squawking 0416?” “Standby. Still working on it” “I’m not receiving your transponder.” “Are you getting a receive light?” “No” “Recycle.” “Recycling.” Finally Chukar took pity on me and announced to Reno that my transponder is obviously not working and promised to get it fixed as soon as we can. “OK, stay clear of Class C” “We will” “By the way, moderate to severe turbulence has been reported throughout the region”. With that announcement, Chukar and I were both salivating. This is going to be great!

Westbound into the wind, it was beginning to be a long tow and somewhere along the way Chukar, probably bored, wanted to know our ground speed. Of course, it is only displayed on some obscure page of the GNII that, of course, I was not on. This was my first wave flight with the GNII and a PDA and, as the flight progressed, I found that I used them differently than on a thermal type of day. Anyway, while fumbling with the menu, I’m all over the sky, but finally found the page and dutifully reported 40 mph. Not bad. At least we were moving forward. Finally after about 20 minutes, we entered the smooth climb of the wave right over Stead as expected. With the variometer pegged up and altitude about 9500’ MSL, I released and quickly up I went taking the opportunity to straighten all that stuff on my face, head and ears with both hands this time. I announced to Reno Approach that I was changing to an air-to-air frequency and was promptly overridden by the controller who directed me to remain on theirs. He asked some basic questions like “What was my destination?” and “route of flight and altitude?” After my best guess answers that only a glider pilot can give, he figured out that I was on a joy ride and simply requested that I pass along any significant change of altitude and occasionally report my position when I was near and around the Reno area. Easily done.

My plan or tactic (if you will) in wave is really unsophisticated as I simply try to climb to as high as I can, and then take whatever airspeed comes my way short of redline. When conditions weaken I normally hold my altitude and then follow L/D down should a descent be necessary. I usually set an altitude limit of about 17,500’ but try to fly in a block altitude between 17 and 17.5, which gives me a buffer for that occasional unexpected excursion up. Since flying at or near redline in the 1-26 is often a reality in decent wave conditions, and you cannot trim the ship even close to hands off, a lot of forward stick pressure is required to keep the nose

from shooting up often quite dramatically. A little distraction or inattention and 18,000' can be busted pretty quickly. In the recent past, I have felt the wrath of the 1-26 Association membership after I submitted several flight logger files to their online Sweeps Contest with altitudes exceeding 18,000', and once the FAA graciously ignored my minor transgression into Class A. I really didn't want to test the tolerances of anybody on altitude issues again.

Anxious to get this show on the road, I had to first backtrack to the north a bit to pick up my start point at Stead, then I headed south over Reno and down the Washoe Valley. This was really pretty simple. I was above the lennies and flew on the edge of the cloud line down to my turn at Payneville which is a small community just north of the Alpine County Airport. Then, I turned northbound to track to my turn point over Reno and finally south again to what was sure to be the toughest leg to Lake Topaz. Up to this point, seldom did I sink below 17K, and when I did it was easy to regain any lost energy with a subtle heading change or slowing in a climb. Occasionally, a little inattention or distraction or that welcome drink from my rapidly freezing water supply would get the better of me and I'd catch myself climbing past my 17.5 limit. On the leg to Topaz, the north to south cloud markers ended once I passed Gardnerville which was alright since I had to turn slightly east to track to the lake. I fully expected at that point to lose some, if not all, of the lift that had been so plentiful to this point. As I made that turn, I used the excess airspeed to climb to 17.8 then held my altitude as the airspeed slowly decreased to L/D with the intention of seeing if my plan was going to work out. This was all happening seemingly in slow motion so I went back to that previously mentioned obscure page in GNII to check the groundspeed. It just so happens that also on that page is a nice little piece of information that I have disregarded up until now called "GPS altitude." Instantly it caught my attention and dashed any hopes of this ever being a valid badge flight. It read almost 18,200'. That was nearly a 400 foot difference from my altimeter and in the wrong direction. I was very much aware that was possible, and I really should have caught the discrepancy a lot earlier than this. Anyway somewhat heartbroken, I decided to continue my plan which was working well as I followed L/D down to nearly 14,000', made the turn over Topaz and headed toward an uneventful finish at Minden.

As I landed and rolled out, there was a jubilant Chukar waiting for me on the ramp having driven down from Reno. He had not only launched me 3 hours earlier, but also chased me down to Minden to

help recover the aircraft and give me a ride home. He was pretty excited over the prospect of a successful Diamond Goal in the 1-26 although, I had alerted him to the possible altitude issue before I landed. But like me, he was also ecstatic over the PASCO Egg returning to Air Sailing for the first time since "Who knows when?" We'll settle for one out of two.

We bedded 09H down and drove over to the SoaringNV hanger. Fred LaSor, the co-owner, had been heads up of the possible change of ownership of the Egg and had waited on us. He couldn't have been nicer as he happily signed the official logbook, gave Chukar and me possession of the coveted Pasco Egg. Following a photo shoot, we drove home recounting war stories and planning the details of our next wave flight

Back home, I anxiously downloaded the flight (you never really know for sure), and actually several altitude transgressions were confirmed. My Diamond Goal will have to wait. On a positive note, at least I had rounded all my turnpoints which has never been a strong part of my badge flying history. The egg looks mighty nice sitting at the Air Sailing Gliderport.

So I have some lessons to relearn. On a good wave day, it is not necessary to cruise at the max (speed or altitude), even in a 1-26. If you're are looking to record a valid Badge, Sweeps or OLC flight, or simply trying to achieve good airmanship, one just has to consider 18K a brick wall that cannot be penetrated whether it is a GPS altitude, barometric altitude or your aircraft's altimeter. Know your instruments and how they compare, including and especially the transponder (which was not a factor in this instance but is the ultimate biggie). Of course, if there is discrepancy, make the adjustment. Now that I have discovered that obscure page in GNII, I routinely use it on wave flights and constantly compare it with the altimeter. As they say "Live and learn." Darn, and I thought I knew everything. Just remember to have fun with your badge attempts and sweeps flights. This one was a blast!



Calendar:

April 17 - Spring Work Party Cindy Donovan 925-932-4269 donovan_c@sbcglobal.net

May 1- Spring Regular Meeting of the ASI Board of Trustees Dick Horn, 408-737-7887, dhorn15@comcast.net

June 7-11 – Sixteenth Annual Thermaling Camp Rob Stone 775-626-8982 rstone18@charter.net

June 13-18 – 24th Annual Cross Country Camp David Prather, 3179 Boeing Road Cameron Park, CA 95682-7821, 530-672-6993 or dwprather68@yahoo.com

June 23-30 – Bishop Encampment Bob Spielman

July 11-17 – Air Sailing Sports Class Regionals Rob Stone 775-626-8982 rstone18@charter.net

July 19-23 WSPA Soaring Seminar Neita Montague

August 7-8 Gerlach Dash Bob Spielman

TBD Fall Trustee's Meeting Dick Horn, 408-737-7887, dhorn15@comcast.net

September 11 Banquet Dick Horn, 408-737-7887, dhorn15@comcast.net

AIR SAILING NEWS

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