



# WEST WIND April / May 2002



GLIDER IN TOW Another tow full of promises from Truckee. No clouds are visible early in the day.

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## Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the Pacific Soaring Council, Inc., a non-profit, 501(c)3 corporation, is to initiate, sponsor, promote and carry out plans, policies and activities that will further the education and development of soaring pilots. Specifically, activities will promote and teach the safety of flight; meteorology; training in the physiology of flight, and the skills of cross country and high altitude soaring. Other activities will be directed towards the development of competition pilots and the organization and support of contests at the local, regional, national and international levels of soaring. PASCO is the acronym for the Council. WestWind is the monthly publication of PASCO. Material may be reprinted without permission. The present board will remain in office until November 2001. Current dues are \$25 annually from the month after receipt of payment.

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### Sierra Highway Information

Auburn - 702 793-1313

**Volume 37, No (4/5) (500 Copies)** Calendar of Events, Ty White; Editorial Policy: WestWind is the journal of the Pacific Soaring Council. Material published in WestWind is freely contributed by members of PASCO. The accuracy of information and the opinions expressed are the responsibility of the contributor. Other publications may reproduce material printed herein, but credit is requested as to source. Classified rate is \$10 per up to 35 words. Send ad and payment to editor. Display advertising rates available upon request. Articles and photo submissions are encouraged. The deadline for submission is the 5th day of the preceding month. Submit all materials to Editor, Janice Hoke 4188 Plateau Ct, Reno, NV 89509, 775-747-4145 h, 775-788-6307 w, [janice@abaris.com](mailto:janice@abaris.com)

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**Central California Soaring Club** Avenal Gliderport - 600 LaNeve Blvd, Avenal CA 93204, 559-386-9552

**Chico Soaring Association (CSA)** - Orland Airport, Orland, CA. Contact Elden Hinkle, 530-898-8101 h, ehinkle@aol.com

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**Central California Soaring Club** Avenal Gliderport, Avenal, CA. Contact Mario Crosina, 1747 Bobolink Lane, Fresno, CA (559) 251-7933.

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**Crazy Creek Soaring Society (CCSS)** - Crazy Creek Gliderport, Middletown, CA. Contact Roger Archey, (415) 924-2424.

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**Minden Soaring Club** - P.O. Box 361, Minden, NV 89423 Contact Rick Walters (775) 265-3386.

**Mount Shasta Soaring Center** - Siskiyou County Airport, Montague, CA, Contact Gary Kemp, 530-934-2484, gkemp@sunset.net

**Nevada Soaring Association (NSA)** - Air Sailing Gliderport, NV. Contact Vern Frye (775) 825-1125 h

**Northern California Soaring Association (NCSA)** Byron Airport, Byron, CA. Contact Mike Schneider (925) 426-1412

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**SOARING SOCIETY OF AMERICA** <http://www.ssa.org>  
**PACIFIC SOARING COUNCIL** <http://www.ranlog.com/pasco/index.html>  
**AIR SAILING INC.** <http://www.airsailing.org>  
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**CENTRAL CALIFORNIA SOARING CLUB** <http://www.soaravenal.com>  
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**SOAR HOLLISTER** <http://www.soarhollister.com/>  
**WILLIAMS SOARING CENTER** <http://www.williamssoaring.com/>  
**VALLEY SOARING ASSOCIATION** <http://www.community.net/~soaring/>

# Minutes of the PASCO Board of Directors

March 4, 2002

The BOD meeting was held at 7 p.m. at the office of BASE Consulting, Oakland, Calif.

**ATTENDING:** Jim Alton, Karol Hines, Rolf Peterson, Ty White

**TELECONFERENCE:** Buck Arnold, Andrew McFall, Kenny Price

**NOT PRESENT:** Chad Moore

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** John Bell reports: Combined operating funds in the checking and savings accounts plus cash pending deposit totaled \$11,117.94. This is after payment for publication of the February / March WestWind. As of 1/1/02, the scholarship fund contained \$7,188.71.

During the winter months the significant financial activities of PASCO are publishing WestWind and receiving membership renewals. Comparing the ten-month period May 2001 through February 2002 with the corresponding period a year earlier, membership income is roughly steady. The numbers are:

May - February 2002: \$7,854

May - February 2001: \$7,963.

The difference of about \$100 represents four memberships.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

**PUBLICATIONS:** WestWind editor, Janice Hoke, has proposed a schedule of nine issues during 2002. Publications chairman Ty White will encourage publishing a 10<sup>th</sup> issue. Publication costs of WestWind are not a current concern in determining the number of issues.

Suggestions for WestWind content included featuring a club each month with clubs submitting articles and information on club activities, membership numbers, and club gliders. Reprints of items of interest from old issues of Westwind (e.g. 10 years, 25 years ago) were also suggested.

Ty White is looking into possibility of email distribution of Westwind for those who want it. Ty noted that electronic distribution requires a large pdf file that takes a long time to download to recipients with dial-up modems.

The May 6 Board meeting will be added to the WestWind calendar of events.

Karol Hines stated that a review of WestWind advertising rates is pending. Andrew McFall reported that businesses in the Minden area have expressed interest in placing ads in WestWind. Ad rate information is needed to get ads placed.

Ty White reported that John Cars has volunteered to be webmaster for the

PASCO website. John will be working with Marc Ramsey and Chad Moore to get an ISP and set up a website with a new domain name. Ty will provide an update at the next Board meeting.

Ty White is working with Glenn Cobb to develop a member handbook. Ty has assembled some PASCO membership information kits and given them to Crazy Creek. He will distribute kits to Minden, Williams, and Hollister also.

**AWARDS:** No report. Karol Hines will be consulting with Cindy Donovan on criteria for awards.

**PUBLIC RELATIONS:** Revisions to the *How to Become a Glider Pilot* brochure are still in progress. Andrew McFall reported that Minden has reserved a display space at the Reno Air Races in September. Kenny Price reported that Williams Soaring will have a display at the Golden West Airshow at Yuba County Airport, Sept. 6-8. Buck Arnold will check into having a display at the Watsonville Airshow in May. Karol Hines and Ty White will coordinate a presentation on PASCO at the BASA membership meeting in April. The following FBO site representatives to PASCO have been confirmed: Drew Pearce for Hollister, Kenny Price for Williams, Andrew McFall for Minden and Mike Johnson for Truckee. Need to confirm site representatives for Avenal, Byron, and Crazy Creek.

Buck Arnold presented options and costs for PASCO membership recognition items - bumper stickers, window decals, lapel pins, cloth patches. The Board voted to order 1,000 window decals to be distributed to all PASCO members and 200 lapel pins to be awarded to participants in designated PASCO activities.

**SAFETY:** Andrew is soliciting articles from Region 11 glider instructors to be published monthly in Westwind on a rotating basis: Andrew McFall, Kenny Price, Drew Pearce. Peter Deane will be presenting his safety seminar at Minden.

PASCO will cosponsor the Wave Camp at Minden April 27 - May 5 with Soar Minden. Andrew McFall is the Wave Camp manager.

**COMPETITION:** Karol Hines has received the SSA sanctions for the regional contests at Siskiyou County, May 27-31, and at Minden, June 15-16 and 22-24. The contest at Siskiyou County will be Open Class only.

**PASCO LEAGUE:** Dates have been set for the 2002 PASCO League contests. Jim Alton has created a PASCO League email address and is contacting 2001 participants to encourage formation of teams.

**FAA LIAISON:** Rolf Peterson will consult with Andrew McFall about any substantive changes in the FAA Letter of Agreement for the Minden wave windows.

Karol Hines, Bernald Smith, Carl Herold, and Rolf Peterson participated in a government affairs working group meeting chaired by Jim Short at the SSA convention. The working group addressed the need for SSA to develop positions to deal with future developments in security and airspace regulation. Among topics addressed were improving internal and external communications, developing a network for dealing with the FAA at all levels, expanding SSA policy on installation of Mode C and Mode S transponders, and encouraging installation and use of Mode C transponders in gliders operating in high-traffic environments.

**EQUIPMENT:** After discussion about the usefulness of the PASCO equipment trailer for staging contests, the Board voted to sell the trailer.

**OLD BUSINESS:** Carl Herold will conduct the cross-country seminar at UC Berkeley on March 9. Buck Arnold proposed that the PASCO Banquet and Fall Safety Seminar be held in the Sacramento area this year. The Board agreed that Buck can proceed to locate a venue in the Sacramento area. Cost proposals and award criteria are needed from Stan Davies to determine how PASCO can help expand, leverage, and subsidize the youth program within Region 11.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Many pilots and pilot organizations in the Northern California region are working the issue of the Dunsmuir-Mott Airport closure. Janice Hoke will be running an article in Westwind.

**SSA DIRECTORS NEWS:** The SSA will be restructuring its member dues schedule. The full member dues classification that includes Soaring magazine, email notifications, and members only online services will increase to \$75 per year.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.



# Join PASCO today!

A \$25 Membership includes A One Year subscription to *WestWind*

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<b>Mini Nimbus B</b>	<b>\$48</b>	<b>\$215</b>
<b>4-Grob 103 Acros</b>	<b>\$60</b>	<b>\$260</b>
<b>2-Grob 102s</b>	<b>\$41</b>	<b>\$190</b>

#### **New for 2002:**

26 New Glider Tiedowns on the East Side.

We now have on line a GROB 103 with paraplegic controls for individual or instructional flight.

A Katana DA-20 A 1 for power instruction, cross country course surveying, and scenic rides is now available at Soar Minden

East side tie downs complete with concrete wheel paths are ready for occupancy. Tie down your glider and trailer for \$7 a day or \$30 a month

\* Daily rate includes unlimited use of glider, O<sub>2</sub>, Barograph, Parachute & 1st tow up to 3000 ft tow.

# Years of planning and flying result in a record flight

By Sergio Colacevich

**Editor's Note:** *Sergio Colacevich describes the careful planning, his multiple attempts, and some sights and observations made in his July 2001 flight, the first 1000k FAI triangle out of Truckee.*

The 1000-kilometer flight is a monumental achievement, an event that is more an enterprise than a flight. It gives soaring another dimension.

The 1000k triangle is set apart from shorter flights because it covers such a large area, exceeding the span of our knowledge of the area where we normally fly.

The weather involved has influences that are difficult to predict. The time necessary to complete the triangle is always very long and is taxing on the physical resistance and mental concentration of the pilot.

## Preliminary planning for the flight

Having the intent to do a 1000k FAI triangle (which, by the way, is a good candidate for the Hilton Cup) I found it easy to choose the layout.

I knew the area where I would have the best chance of making a long flight is in the Great Basin, which spans all the western part of Nevada and spreads into Utah. It is a plateau with an average elevation of 5,000 feet, regularly divided by mountain ranges aligned in a south to north direction, with peak elevations of 10,000 feet. The arid desert environment produces strong thermals all

summer long, with tops to 18,000 feet, over. Minden and Truckee at the west margin of this area.

The 1000k is more easily done from Minden, mostly because to come back to Truckee late in the evening is not easy. Truckee has a pattern altitude of 7,000 feet, and coming from the south the last glide will usually start from the PineNut mountains, at a distance of about 50 miles and a height of 14,000 feet, crossing a ridge and a portion of Lake Tahoe.

Coming from the east, the predominant 15 mph westerly winds slow down the speed and sweep away the evening thermals. But I normally dream tasks that start from the airport where I fly, which in summer is Truckee, and so I accepted the challenge.

During previous flights from Truckee going south, I always could see across the Carson Sink, absolutely devoid of clouds, a line of cumulus on the east above some faraway invisible mountains. In that direction the map shows the Toiyabe Range, which extends in a southwest to northeast direction for 80 miles, with lower elevation ranges continuing another 55 miles up to Battle Mountain. I was

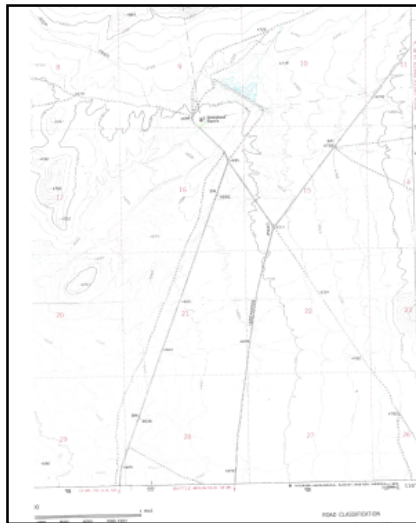
immediately convinced that one of leg of my triangle had to be along the Toiyabe Range. Another leg would have to be in line with the White Mountains just east of Bishop, a range famous for its generosity in number and strength of thermals.

Refining the turnpoint location is one of the joys of planning a task. The task easily took shape: From Truckee to a point on the Whites, then from there to Battle Mountain, then back to

Truckee. I placed the first turnpoint on the Whites at the junction of Death Valley Road, which crosses the Whites and goes down into Death

Valley, and White Mountain Road which goes to the radio towers.

I placed the second turnpoint at Izzenhood Ranch, about 25 miles north of Battle Mountain. The last leg would have to cross four mountain ranges before flattening out in somewhat featureless territory, and I would be back to more familiar country toward Pyramid Lake near Air Sailing.



Map Of Izzenhood Ranch

Task dimensions are  $172+262+203=637$  miles. 1,000k is equal to 621 miles but I purposely chose a longer distance so as to beat the previous record of 631 miles, which according to the rules had to be exceeded by 10k (6 miles).

## First attempts

I made the first attempt in July 1994 with my Ventus. I flew the triangle backward, going to Battle Mountain first and then to the turnpoint on the Whites, but had to land in Bishop, after a 7 hour 10 minute flight. A tow plane is stationed in Bishop and I was able to fly back the following day (a Sunday).

That flight was memorable for me because it confirmed the fabulous conditions along the Toiyabe Range. On that day the cloud base was about 20,000 feet, the lift from 8 to 10 knots. Going south of Battle Mountain, I could see dust devils starting from the ground and going all the way up to cloud base. At one point I flew toward one of these portents but I could not reach it: I found an 11-knot thermal that I simply could not pass by and stopped in it. At 18,000 feet I was still flying together with corn leaves, hay and other debris.

In August 1995, I flew to Izzenhood Ranch with taking a picture



Dam and Green Fields

of it my only purpose. The return was difficult enough that I had to land in Carson City, after 394 miles and 7 hours and 16 minutes. I tried again in August 1996. This time I started in the southerly direction, going around the Whites and then Izzenhood, landing 50 miles short of Truckee at Tiger Field, having flown 586 miles in 9 hours and 7 minutes. Then in August 1997 I was able to reach Izzenhood but coming back I had to land in Derby, flying 308 miles in 5 hours 50 minutes.



Flying just above the town of Reno

There were no attempts in 1998 since I had no glider. In 1999 I got a Discus A. I did at least four attempts that year, at times starting in the southerly direction, at times in the easterly direction. In 2000 I did at least five attempts. The most notable of these flights was to Izzenhood, then to the Whites, then northwest on the north leg toward Truckee for a good while, before turning to land in Bishop. That flight totaled 520 miles in 9 hours 19 minutes.

**Lessons learned**

By the end of the season, I still had not determined which way was better for going around the circuit. Starting to the south would mean beginning the flight on well-known territory, normally with some head wind. The longest leg to Izzenhood was then downwind in the strongest part of the day. From there, I would find myself with a head wind for all of the last leg, going toward a dying day in weakening soaring conditions. The probabilities of landing out far from home were high, because even if I had to abort the flight, I still had to almost reach Battle Mountain to find good soaring conditions for the return trip – the Carson Sink is an enormous dry lake in the middle of the triangle, with absolutely no lift and practically impassable with a glider.

Starting to the east would make a

better use of the prevailing winds. It would mean going toward a weak soaring territory early in the day, with a predictably slow start, but perhaps with some help from a light wind. The longest leg against the wind in the strongest conditions of the day was not a problem, and the last leg would have the help of some tail wind. The wind though, would become nearly a head wind at the very end (the evening washout breeze from the faraway ocean). The last 50 miles were highly dependant

on good lift late in the day, a thing which is not infrequent, but not guaranteed by any means.

However, the real unknowns are the thunderstorms. If it were a day that overdeveloped, the whole area from the Whites to Minden would become an enormous almost impassable cell. It might also become difficult to fly in the long leg from the Whites to Izzenhood Ranch; while normally the leg from Izzenhood to Truckee would still be in reasonable conditions, as this area normally has very few clouds. On such a day, it would be good to begin the flight going south, so as to pass through the forming thunderstorms before they overdevelop.

A trend was taking shape, though: The meteorological conditions in the

**The difficulty of the 1000k task**

It was difficult 30 years ago to do the 500k, but the difficulty resided mostly in the limits of the sailplanes of the time. The task was prominent in the map and conceivable in the mind – the turnpoints were at times visible from one to the other. To do 1000 kilometers involves going much beyond the span of our knowledge of the area where we normally fly.

The FAI triangle is the target task, with a lower limit of 25% for the shortest leg and an upper limit of 45% for the longest. The swinging task with the turnpoints allowing a back-and-forth course is a help given to the pilots that do not have the possibility to do a FAI triangle, and it is still a formidable task, but is not the same thing. In my opinion, the two tasks are different and should be in a different category.

On the other hand, we have already so many different tasks that it is not sensible to add yet another one. Let me put it this way: if a pilot is in a area where it is possible to do the FAI triangle, he/she should feel morally and sportively obliged to go for it and leave the back-and-forth to those pilots who are not as lucky.

The 1000k triangle is set apart from shorter flights because it covers such a large area. It will be difficult to know all of the terrain to be covered, because it goes so far beyond the local flights. The weather involved has influences that are difficult to predict and may change in different ways in different parts of the task area. The time necessary to complete the triangle is always very long and is taxing on the physical resistance and mental concentration of the pilot. It necessitates starting very early and staying in the air very late.

Nonetheless, it is a race against time because if you don't average at least 60 mph it is impossible to complete the task. Many pilots, including myself, could make attempts only on Saturdays, because of the possibility of landing far away, something one cannot afford to do on Sundays. It is a flight that requires preparation, watching the weather, and having some good help on the ground with the cooperation of friends and personnel at the soaring operation where the flight starts.

In the Great Basin, it is possible to do the 1000k FAI triangle and I went for it.

area of the leg connecting Truckee to the Battle Mountain area are much different from those of the rest of the flight track. This leg was always the weakest, both early in the day and late, with little cloud development, and widely spaced thermals. The thermal strength was comparable to the rest of the area, but to locate the thermals was time-consuming and often resulted in slower speed so as not to get too low while looking for the next one.

So, the most difficult component of a good day consisted in having decent meteorological conditions in all of the very vast area of the task. In addition, I think there was also some lack of luck - I found very few days in a year which were suitable for the attempt, and on those days I could not be at the field.

### Planning the timetable

With this we arrive at the year 2001. I was frustrated that this task was requiring so many attempts. The year before I was trying really hard and wasn't able to make it. There was always a reason for not completing the task.

The most common reason was that I could not begin the task early enough. In Truckee, it is pretty common to take off at 11 a.m., or at 10:30 a.m. or 10 a.m. and sometimes even at 9:30 a.m. But in these last few years it was so difficult to have an early start. Often the take off was after 11:30 a.m. and that made it impossible to consider attempting the task. I had prepared three time schedules at 100, 125 and 150 km/hr (62, 78 and 93 mph) and the corresponding starts were 10 a.m., 11 a.m. and noon. The completion time would be respectively 8:17, 7:14 and 6:52 p.m. That meant taking off at least 30 minutes before the start to have the time to get to a suitable altitude at the designated start point, which was at the east end of Runway 19 in Truckee.

The procedure I chose was to have

a high tow to 11,000 feet, then dive to 10,000 feet when crossing the start. Accounting for the allowable 1000 meters difference in elevation between start and finish, this allowed me to complete the task at 7,000 feet, our normal pattern altitude at Truckee. That wasn't very cheap but in the excitement of a promising day, one does not think about miserable details of money. This year I was really determined to try and complete the elusive flight. I closely monitored the weather

weather. I tried again on Sunday, July 22, finding atrociously weak weather. The forecast looked good for the following day, Monday, so I decided to take a day of vacation and try the task. At this point, I was exasperated because the season for long lights practically ends around Aug. 10, and after that, the days may still be strong but are too short to attempt a long task. By now I had tried the task at least 20 times in the course of seven years.



The heroes of the day. Everybody in the picture - plus the photographer —did at least 500 K. In all, 5 pilots made 3000 K out of Truckee.

### A serious attempt

On Monday, July 23, I was able to take off at 10:30 a.m. and make a start at 10:50 a.m. The day was finally promising and I made good progress rounding the White Mountain turnpoint at 1:46 p.m., about 30 minutes behind schedule. Then the sky became very cloudy. I was at Austin, in the middle of the second leg, at 3:48 p.m., about 26 minutes behind schedule with thermals up to 17,000 feet, when things began to go wrong. An extended low cover was hanging in front of me. I considered

and decided that if it were necessary, I would go to Truckee even on work-days.

### More attempts

On July 1, 2001, I attempted the task but had to quit at Air Sailing after only 60 miles because it was too late and the lift too poor. The following day, July 2, I tried again and reached Izzenhood and Boundary Peak where I aborted the flight 40 miles short of the turnpoint on the Whites, but made it back to Truckee for a total of 568 miles in 8 hours 21 minutes.

I tried again on July 12, making it to Bishop and back. I tried on July 14, making it to Bishop, Izzenhood, but then landing in Winnemucca where some friends were on a gliding safari and there was a tow plane available for a tow the following day. I tried on Saturday, July 21, finding miserable

if it was better passing through it or going off course by 40 degrees to the east, where the sky looked pretty good. I decided to stay on course. The lift became poor, with a strange mild turbulence made of short ups and downs.

I slowly descended to 11,000 feet and began to make large deviations looking for lift under the amorphous clouds above. I deviated 90 degrees to the west towards weak-looking clouds. While turning in weak lift I saw another glider just slightly higher a couple of miles to the east. It is amazing how the sight of another sailplane relieves the sense of solitude of a glider pilot. There is another guy, a friend, having all the difficulties and the elation that I have. That glider was turning and I tried to make radio contact without receiving an answer. After a few turns the glider continued



in a south direction. I was very surprised to find a glider so far away from any known soaring place. I concluded it must have been going back to Tonopah, about 130 miles south.

I then went slowly in a northeast direction, following a large valley for about 30 miles, stopping every now and then in poor lift and losing altitude down to 9,000 feet. I was beginning to

worry not only for the conclusion of the flight, but also about where to land here and how to get a retrieve from this far. The air still had the same characteristics of a mild turbulence, made of shivers

and quivers, with occasional poor lift which would suddenly disappear. The cloud base was low and oppressing under a large overcast. I was blaming myself for not having chosen the route to the east where I could see high, well formed clouds, now unreachable from my low altitude.

Having hit an elevation of 10,000 feet in one of the poor thermals, I tried to go toward Battle Mountain, which looked sunny beyond a range of low mountains. After 30 seconds, I could see curtains of rain just starting to fall in front of me. Another couple of miles, and a lightning flashed exactly in my direction. It was about 3 miles ahead as far as I could judge, and it started from the cloud, did not reach the ground but it stopped at about my height. I pressed on. After another 20 seconds another lightning flashed, same as the previous one. Seeing the rain, the lightning, my altitude diminishing and the ground rising, I left behind any thought of reaching Battle Mountain in that way and retreated to the valley for about 10 miles, at 90 knots in the fierce sink.

I stopped in the first lift I found, at 7,500 feet, with no landing places

in sight in the 5,000-foot valley floor. Fortunately a slow climb followed, in a situation that I will never forget.

I was exactly above a mining operation. The mine was an enormous square dug in the ground, about a half-mile per side. It was terraced in a reversed pyramid shape, perhaps 400 feet deep, with ramps along the sides, on which big dump trucks were slowly

crawling out of the hole. The narrow bottom was crowded with equipment excavating the material. I was looking around to see an airstrip,

thinking that such a big operation should have one, but I did not see any. I stayed there for about 15 minutes, slowly climbing and feeling better every minute. The vision will remain forever in my memory of the big hole in the ground, the silent machinery and slowly moving trucks that were gradually becoming smaller and smaller while I was going up, toward the clouds and safety.

The thermal, God bless, took me up to 11,000 feet. At this point the rain in front of me was not so heavy, and I turned towards the mountain range, being able to cross it without trouble. As soon as I was on the other side, I found lift everywhere.

At this point I had lost about one hour and the return was in serious doubt, but I decided to turn Izzenhood

Ranch anyway, which I did at about 5:52 p.m. with 200 miles to go. It looked silly, but I was so charged with the desire to complete the flight that I did not even consider surrendering – a heroic attitude that at times in the past made me accomplish fantastic flights, and at other times put me in deep trouble. I headed toward home knowing that the challenge now was to cover as much distance as possible, in order to diminish tomorrow's retrieve. I was relieved that I was able to continue the flight instead of landing somehow, somewhere, far away from home.

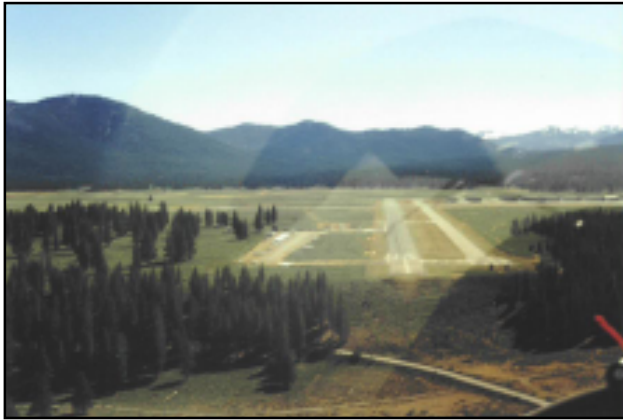
Resenting the storm that killed my hopes for the flight, I decided to use that very same stormy weather to get home. I purposely avoided fine looking clouds to my right and went around the edge of the storm on my left. It paid off handsomely. I was able to have very strong climbs and fast glides for 80 miles all the way to Lovelock.

Here I observed a spectacular meteorological phenomenon: Cold air descending from the storm on my left would displace air on the ground and make it climb. I could see the line of lift made physically evident by dust climbing up to 1,000 foot above the ground, then becoming invisible but reappearing at high altitude in form of cloud. I went in that direction and was able to climb by gliding straight

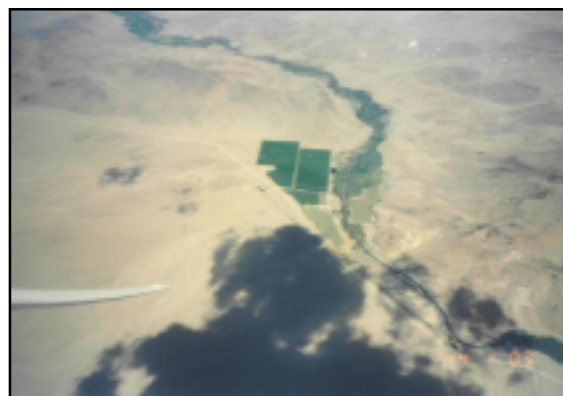
ahead, occasionally stopping briefly in some robust patches of lift and gaining 5,000 feet from 12,000 feet to 17,000 feet at the end of a 30-mile run.

From here I could reach

Carson City for sure, but the clouds had finished, and after an interval were visible much farther away in direction of Minden. I glided toward small puffy clouds until I saw that the



The approach to Runway 19 at Truckee. Because of the 100' elevation drop at the threshold, it looks like landing on a carrier.



The Hilton Ranch. An oasis of green in the middle of the harsh desert.

same meteorological phenomenon that helped me just a short time ago was repeating itself in the valley going to Carson City. Wild hopes of completing the flight began to grow inside me and I increased the speed to above 100 knots to arrive there in time to exploit the lift shown by the dust. I could have slowed down and gone to the dark clouds on my left, but I thought that I could find better and did not have time to waste. I was below 10,000 feet when I entered the area where I had seen the line of dust but I could not find the lift. I continued to run expecting to hit lift at any time but it did not happen. I found sink instead.

In a short time I found myself below 6,000 feet close to the airport of Carson City. I fought there for another 50 minutes climbing back up to 9,000 feet but eventually landed, cursing myself for not opting for the safety of the clouds when I could. That decision cost me the flight.

#### **Another day, another try**

Dismayed for the outcome of an epic flight due to my haste and wrong decision and concerned about the ending of the season, I decided to take another day off work if necessary. On Wednesday I was back to work and happened to eat lunch at a Chinese restaurant. In a fortune cookie I found this message: "Your luck has been completely changed today."

Mulling over this prediction and learning of a promising forecast for tomorrow, I went to Truckee the next morning, Thursday, July 26. On this day other pilots had been attracted by the good forecast, among them one of my preferred official observers, Jim Darke. I took off a little after 10:30 a.m. I did not take a high tow as usual:

I released at about 9,000 feet because of the strong lift which immediately took me up to about 13,000 feet, with 5 knots at times, under a nice early cloud. I went to the start point and came back hoping to find the same good lift, but it was now weak and irregular. I had to move from place to place searching for a good climb, and when I found it I had already lost about 20 minutes, but I had a good start. At 14,500 feet, I left

Mount Rose to cross the valley to the PineNuts, where I found clouds up to 15,000 feet developing east of the ridge. I reached 14,000 feet at the south end of the PineNuts. On the Sweetwater range near the Hilton Ranch Airport, I got to almost 18,000 feet with 8 knots on the averager and this meant that today was a good day.

I reached White Mountain/Death Valley Road Intersection at 1:39 p.m., about 30 minutes late on my time schedule. From there I went on the longest leg of 262 miles with a nice tailwind and good clouds. The flying was relatively easy with good climbs averaging 7 knots. I was flying with 5 knots in the MacCready. Reaching the Toiyabe Range I still had 5 to 7 knot thermals and was cruising between 15,000 feet and 17,000 feet, with good clouds all the way and some virgas on the west.

After Austin, I encountered an area with poor lift in the same stretch where I had found difficulties on my flight of three days before, when I lost one hour at low altitude being blocked by a thunderstorm. Remembering the recent ordeal, I was much more careful, slowing my speed and accepting mediocre lift to stay high and play it safe. The situation was different though. In fact, the clouds today were sparse rather than forming an overdevelopment like three days before, but for some reason this spot is a perilous one, sort of a Bermuda Triangle of this region.

The mediocre conditions with sparse and weak-looking clouds continued. After Battle Mountain I had to deviate to some thin clouds, go to the Izzenhood Ranch turnpoint slowly, and slowly come back. The turnpoint was rounded at 4:26 p.m., 10 feet ahead of schedule. Flying downwind had given me a gain of 40 minutes, averaging a speed of 94 mph on the second leg. I tracked back cautiously along the second leg for about 20 miles sounding the weak-looking clouds. After some poor lift I finally found 9 knots to 17,800 feet. I continued toward the sun, staying pretty high, from one shallow cloud to another. The clouds were widely spaced but now with good climbs underneath - cloudbase 17,000 feet and more and 5 knots in the MacCready.

#### **A crucial decision**

Close to Star Peak, at 5:55 p.m. and 130 miles from home, I had to decide which way to go. On my left there was a line of clouds that went for a good while in direction of Minden, but stopped far short of it. On my right across the valley, a few clouds went toward Reno and AirSailing, but stopped impossibly far from home. I decided to go to the right and maybe land in AirSailing or Reno-Stead.

Now the unforgettable part began, and I still relive it in my mind: There I am, reaching the last cloud at 13,000 feet. In front of me it is all blue. I see the mountains around and beyond Truckee very clearly, albeit so far. I do not know what I can do to reach them. It is possible to find lift in the blue, but I know that I have a 15-knot headwind and it is late in the day. I have fought hard battles before in similar circumstances, but I had few wins and many losses.

The lift is poor, but then it improves. I get 3 to 5 knots, although I have to change my position pretty often. Then I see some puffs of cloud forming directly above me. I get all the altitude I can. Now is not the time for racing; it is time to stay high. The lift ends, and I have to continue forward in the blue. The MacCready is at 0 and says I need 17,500 feet, but I only have 16,700 feet. It is blue all the way to Truckee. It is 7 p.m. and I am 65 miles from home.

After beginning the cruise, the Cambridge says that I am now only 500 feet below glide. Evidently it got some more information about the wind. It says I only have 3 knots headwind, and I do not believe it. It should be more than 10 knots - I had a reading of 17 knots only a few minutes ago. The "altitude required" indication of the Cambridge changes wildly by about 1,000 feet at a time in each direction, in consequence of a few knot changes in the wind speed. I reach Pond Peak, the last range before the Reno valley. Here I find a little bit of lift and I cling to it.

Anything is welcome. After a couple of minutes, the lift becomes a steady 2 to 3 knots, and after a while it improves even more to 5 knots. I am 50 miles from home. My eyes are

# Minisafetytips

## Don't break the chain... Positive control checks

By Andrew McFall

'Tis the season for us all to start soaring. As we drive to the gliderport, we reminisce about last year's flights, how good it will be to see our old friends, wondering about this year's flights.

glued to the vario and the altimeter. I reach the altitude that according to the computer is sufficient to get home. I wait there, slowly climbing and seeing my chances improving every second, greedy of lift, hungry for altitude.

I finally decide that, at 16,300 feet and 2,500 feet above glide, it should be safe enough to leave this thermal. I set the MacCready at 3 knots and go. After one mile I call myself stupid, why not take all the available height? The last thermal of the day, and I let it go. But then, slowly I see the margin of height improve even more, and I increase the MacCready value in steps. Eventually I have it set at 5 knots and cruising at 90 knots and over.

I fly directly above Reno. When I cross the ridge of Mt. Rose I know for sure that I have made it. Could I describe my sensations at that time?. I know I felt as light as a feather. One half-mile before the finish, I decrease speed to gain altitude at the crossing of the gate. Then I dissipate my altitude with loops and wingovers. I land at 7:52 p.m. after 9 hours 15 minutes in the air. On the ground I find Jim

The beginning of the season is always full of wonders — and cobwebs.

I firmly believe that, every time we rig or de-rig our gliders, we run an inherent risk of missing something. I believe that the beginning of the year is where we run the highest risk of making big mistakes. The question is, how do we not make them?

Spring check outs are a great idea. Take the time to go and see your local flight instructor, take a couple of flights and get the cobwebs out.

For those of us who own our own gliders, there are many other factors. We not only have to contend with the flying cobwebs, but many of us haven't rigged our gliders since fall.

Cross that with seeing old friends

Darke, Peter Kelly, Key Dismukes, and Dan Dunkel. Dan has done the first 500k of his life. Jim, Peter and Key have all made successful attempts at the Diamond Badge.

Later I realized that I had arrived at the last cloud at about the time that the wind was fading out, as it always does in the late evening. That's why I was finding the wind indications of the computer disconcerting. When Kempton Izuno heard that, he observed that it was the first time that he had heard of a flight that was successful because the wind quit. I stuck the Chinese fortune cookie message on the front of my desk at home.

This is the first 1000k FAI triangle out of Truckee. It set multiple records, including a US National Record for Triangular Distance, Standard Class. It also gave me a much-coveted prize: the winning place in the Hilton Cup. I dedicate my flight to Les Sebald, who loved this place so much. I know he would have liked to brag about it.

Edited by Kathy Hewitt.

Sergio Colacevich is a transportation engineer and works for Caltrans in Sacramento. He came from Italy in 1984 with a Silver badge, gained the Gold badge in 1991, and the three-in-one-shot Diamond in 1996.

(distraction), and the potential is very high for missing something in the rigging procedure or the positive control check. The routine should be like a chain, with no links missing or forgotten.

There are many factors involved in rigging and de-rigging a glider. Unfortunately most of them involve human factors. Here is a list of what I consider to be a few of the human errors while rigging your glider.

1. You see an old friend and stop what you're doing to say hi. (You just broke the chain).
2. You were late to the airport and the soaring is already good. You're in a rush to rig and push out to the flight line. (did you forget the positive control check?)

3. You have just finished putting your wings on and your neighbor asks you to move your glider so he can rig. (broke the chain)

4. You have just finished rigging and now you don't have any tape, so you go to your neighbor but he doesn't have any. You go to the FBO's office and buy some. (broke the chain)

As we enter into this new season I ask all of you to take extra care to follow your routines and don't let the chains be broken.

Andrew McFall, operations manager of Soar Minden and president of the Minden Soaring Club, is PASCO safety committee chairman this year.

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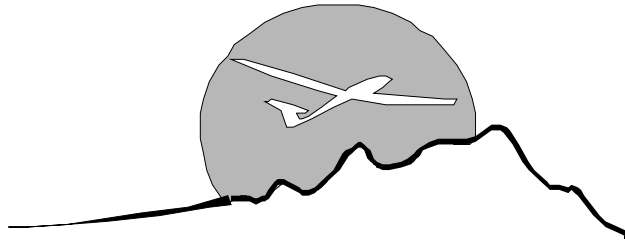
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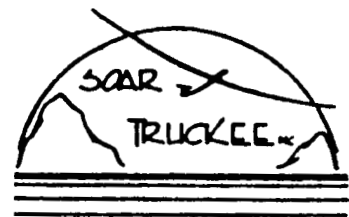


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## Use of Mode C Transponders

### *Reno, Nevada*

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 emphasizes that glider pilots operating in the Reno area must be alert for all air traffic arriving and departing RNO.

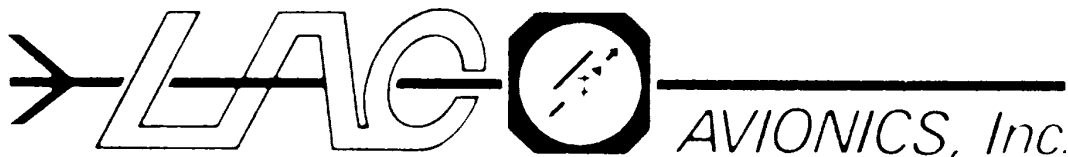
Transponder signals are received by Traffic Collision Avoidance Systems (TCAS) on board commercial aircraft as well as by Air Traffic Control (ATC) Radar. By Air Traffic Control (ATC) Letter of Agreement, gliders in the Reno area can transmit the 0440 transponder code in the blind, without establishing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

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

*A new page has been added to the Minden Soaring Club Web site: <http://www.mindensoaringclub.org/>. Look under the WELCOME page for a new section for those soaring out of Truckee, Minden, or Air Sailing. Please study this material on safe soaring within the Reno ATC area.*

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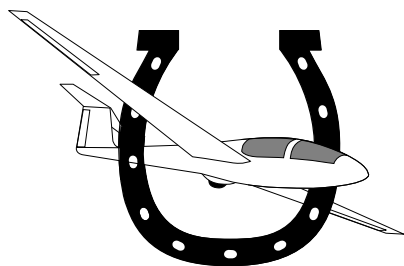
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# PASCO Calendar of Events

**April 28-May 5:** Minden Wave Camp, Minden Tahoe Airport. Sponsored by Minden Soaring Club, PASCO, Soar Minden, High Country Soaring, and Mansburger Aircraft. Contact Andrew McFall, 775-884-4394, AndrewMcFall@aol.com

**May 4,5:** PASCO League Meet #1, Avenal, CA. Contact Jim Alton, (925) 355-9289 (h), ja2483@sbc.com.

**May 6:** PASCO Board Meeting, 7:00 pm, place to be determined. All members invited. If you wish to attend, please contact any PASCO Director for directions.

**May 16-19:** Central California Soaring Club Spring Contest, Avenal, CA. Practice Day May 15. Contact Mario Crosina, 1747 Bobolink Lane, Fresno, CA 93727, (559) 251-7933, mcrosina@pacbell.net. Also see <http://www.soaravenal.com/>

**May 18,19:** Truckee orientation and practice weekend in preparation for the Truckee PASCO League contest (May 25,26). Morning planning sessions. Lead pilots will be available. Contact Bob Korves (916)924-5953 or bkorves@winfirst.com

**May 25,26:** PASCO League Meet #2, Truckee, CA. Contact Jim Alton, (925) 355-9289 (h), ja2483@sbc.com.

**May 27-31:** Region 11 North Regional Championship, Siskiyou County Airport, Montague, CA. OPEN CLASS and 15M only. Entries are limited to 8 in each class. Contact Nancy Kemp, P.O. box 405 Willows, CA 95988, 530-934-2482, nkemp@diamond.sunset.net.

**April 13:** Air Sailing Spring Cleaning Work Party, Air Sailing Gliderport, NV. Contact Dale

Thompson, dale@sinewave.com, 4443 Fieldcrest Dr. Richmond, Ca. 94803-2001, 510-223-4259.

**June 8,9:** PASCO League Meet #3, Air Sailing Gliderport, NV. Contact Jim Alton, (925) 355-9289 (h), ja2483@sbc.com.

**CANCELLED DUE TO RUNWAY WORK:** June 15,16, 22-24: Region 11 Championships, Minden-Tahoe Airport, Minden, NV

**June 17-21:** 2002 Air Sailing Thermalizing Camp, Air Sailing, NV. Contact Rolf Peterson, 2618 Tahoe Dr., Livermore, CA 94550, rolfpete@aol.com, (925) 447-5620 h, (925) 447-4255 w.

**June 23-28:** 2002 Air Sailing Cross-Country Camp, Air Sailing, NV. Contact Chad Moore, 5431 Southside Rd, Hollister, CA 95023-9123, (831) 636-6864 h, chad@outside-the-box.org

**July 1-6:** 2002 Air Sailing Sports Class Contest, Air Sailing Gliderport, NV. Practice Day June 30. SSA-Sanctioned Regional Contest. Contact Chad Moore, 5431 Southside Rd, Hollister, CA 95023-9123, (831) 636-6864 h, chad@outside-the-box.org

**July 4-7:** Family weekend at Air Sailing Gliderport, NV. Contact Rosemary Hayes, 9732 State Route 445, PMB 356, Sparks, NV 89436, (775) 475-2440, crhayes@soar-palomino.com.

**July 8-12:** NSA Safari from AirSailing, NV. Contact Vern Frye for information at (775) 825-1125, eagleduble@aol.com

**July 13 or 14:** PASCO Board Meeting, 7:00 pm, place to be determined. All members invited. If you wish to attend, please contact any PASCO Director for directions.

**July 15-19:** Air Sailing Badge and Record Camp I, Air Sailing, NV. For information contact Charlie Hayes, 9732 Pyramid Lake Highway, PMB 356, Sparks, NV. 89436. Email crhayes@soar-palomino.com. (775) 475-2440

**July 16-25:** 15-Meter Nationals, Tonopah, NV. Practice Days July 14,15. Contact Jim Norris, 767 Palermo Dr., Santa Barbara, CA 93105-4449, (805) 898-1008 h, jim@interwoof.com, website www.imdata.com

**July 22-26:** Air Sailing Badge and Record Camp II, Air Sailing, NV. For information contact Charlie Hayes, 9732 Pyramid Lake Highway, PMB 356, Sparks, NV. 89436. Email crhayes@soar-palomino.com. (775) 475-2440

**July 27,28:** PASCO League Meet #4, Minden, NV. Contact Jim Alton, (925) 355-9289 (h), ja2483@sbc.com.

**August 10,11:** The Fifth Annual Gerlach Dash, Air Sailing Gliderport to Gerlach, NV. Sponsored by Nevada Soaring Association. Contact Vern Frye for information at (775) 825-1125. Motel reservations at Bruno's in Gerlach (775) 557-2220.

**September 9:** PASCO Board Meeting, 7:00 pm, place to be determined. All members invited. If you wish to attend, please contact any PASCO Director for directions.

**November 4:** PASCO Board Meeting, 7:00 pm, place to be determined. All members invited. If you wish to attend, please contact any PASCO Director for directions.

**PASCO**  
Pacific Soaring Council  
41600 Marigold Drive  
Fremont, CA 94539



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