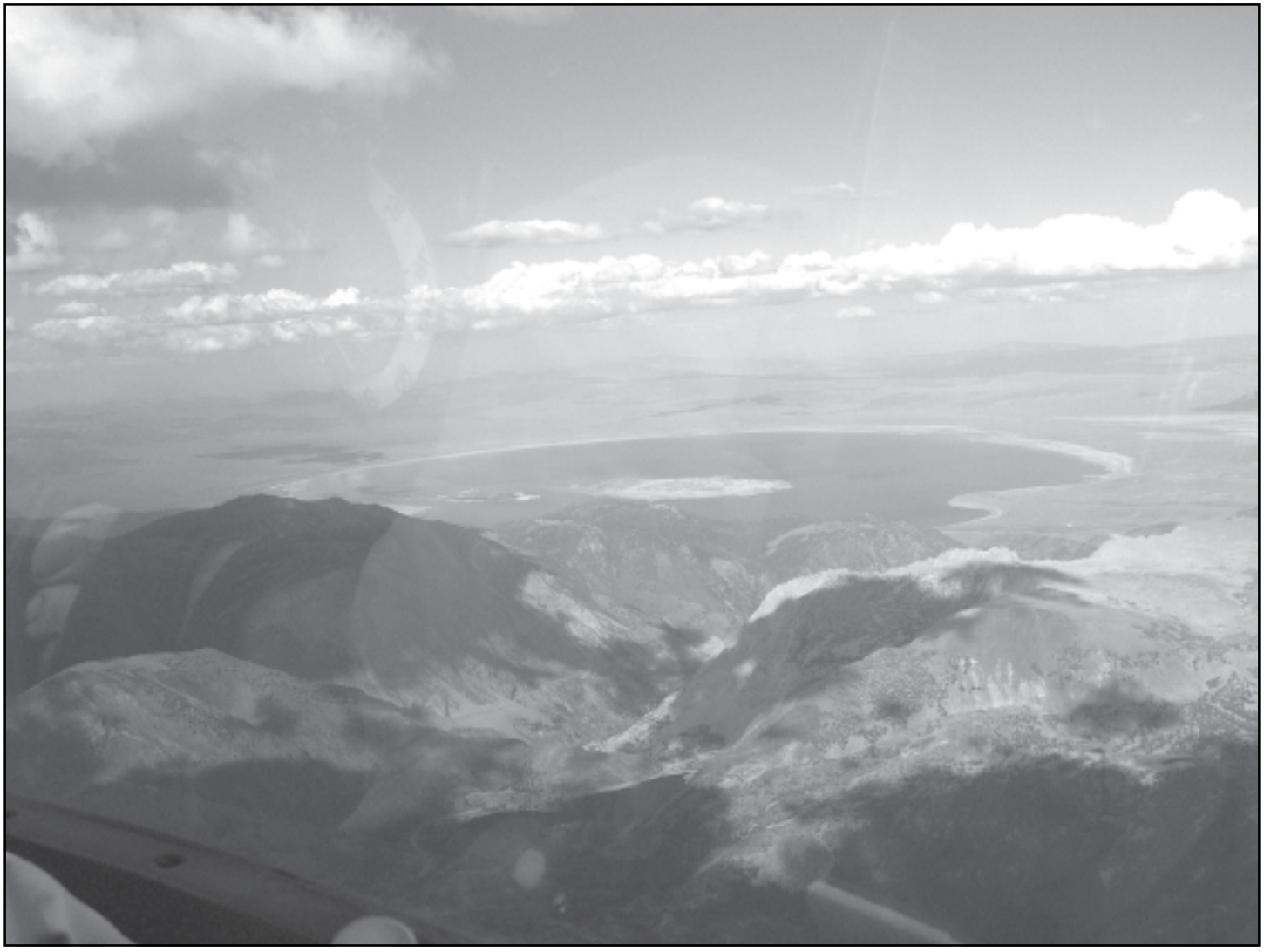
October 2003

WESTWIND



Mono Lake by by Brian Choate, DG3 - *see story on page eight*

ON THE INSIDE

FAA Safety Seminar
See page 9-10 for more information!

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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The Unconventional Record

By Sergio Colacevich

The cloud seen from the ground, looking south west. The mountain on the bottom right is Freel Peak, with an altitude of 10,881'!

In 2001 I read in the Soaring Magazine about the 100k world record of Jim Payne, obtained by using wave lift, and I thought that it was a good idea and I could make it work for myself.

Jim flew a Discus A at over 146 mph in the Southern California Sierra wave. The peculiarity of this record is that it is a FAI triangle, where each side must have the minimum length of 28% of the total triangular distance. Until then, all records in wave were obtained by flying up and down the wave, not across it. It takes some imagination, and a good knowledge of the wave, to conceive a task involving part of the flight in a 1400 fpm down.

Anyway, the result was spectacular and I thought that I could use the same approach to try a record in the State of Nevada. As everybody knows, Minden (4718') is the mine of Diamond altitudes and I decided that this winter I would leave my glider, which also is a Discus A, at that airport. A nice thing about Minden is that there is a wave window. This allows flying much higher than 18,000'. I was very much interested in altitude, because the higher we go, the faster we can fly and at 18,000' our ground speed is 32% higher that the ASI airspeed.

The Lake Tahoe from the south. In the foreground, the town of South Lake Tahoe. The Wave Lake turnpoint is just short of the middle of the lake. Note the absence of clouds over the lake, with rotor clouds and a wall of wave clouds on the right.

The first thing I did was to try and conceive an optimum strategy for the flight. Should my first leg be in wave and then go to the turn point across wind, or should I do the opposite? And the turn point across wind, should it be up or down wind? But most important, and more difficult to evaluate: Should I go straight to the turn point across wind, taking all the sink obliquely; or would it be better to run part of that leg in wave, and then cross the wave at a suitable point, so as to diminish my exposure to the terrible sink? And in this case, where was the optimum point at which to leave the wave? In addition, I had to determine the best speed to fly in this particular environment, where the theory of thermal flying does not directly apply.

After some study, I resolved that my Start Point, which I called Wave Start, would be southwest of Minden, and my first Turn Point, which I called Wave Lake, in the middle of the Lake Tahoe. I would follow the wave up to an optimum point, which I called Wave Depart, go to the Wave Lake turnpoint, then come back to another optimum point in the wave which I called Wave Return, from there following the wave to a point in the middle of the Washoe Lake which I called Wave Washoe, and then continue climbing in wave back to the Start Point. I could start at 21,000' and climb to 23 or 24 thousand feet using the Minden wave window, then cut down to Wave Lake losing a horrible amount of altitude in the fierce sink, be below 18,000' when leaving the window, and after turning Wave Lake come back to the wave and climb all the rest of the last leg. I would be back at the Wave Start at the elevation of 18,000', so as to be within 1000 meters of the starting altitude.

I built myself a spreadsheet, which quickly became more and more involved and complicated, on which to test the various strategies. I wanted to find the best location of

the Depart and the Return Point. Studying the GPS trace from Jim Paynes's flight I estimated the strength of the lift and sink he encountered, and estimated the wind velocity. The wind speed is important because when in wave it determines the crab angle against the wind, and when flying across the wave it increases or decreases the aircraft speed by the amount of the wind speed. The complications are that the wind speed increases with altitude, and the ground speed of the aircraft also changes with the flying altitude according to the atmospheric pressure, at rates that have to be determined and incorporated in the calculation. My spreadsheet took all that into account and gave me the position of my departing and returning points and the speeds to fly etc., for a wave strength which I initially assumed to be 1000 fpm. I copied the spreadsheet and got the speeds to fly for different wave strengths, 1200 fpm, 1400 fpm and 1600 fpm. The spreadsheets worked beautifully and my engineer's heart was singing at all that mathematical perfection. In the actual flight, things went differently.

Lake Tahoe seen from the east ridge, looking west. The Wave Lake turn point is just in front. On the other side of the lake the Emerald Bay, to the left the Fallen Leaf Lake. Note the streaks formed by the wind on the water surface. In the foreground, a puffy rotor cloud. It seems you can feel the wind howling on your face, but the flight is exceptionally smooth.

However, it was important for me to have a good idea of the theory, so that I could assess the importance and limits of the various factors in play. Two wave flights that I did during that winter allowed me to refine the spreadsheets with actual flight data, and my confidence increased. In those flights I was able to appreciate the strength of the sink, and found out that close to the Wave Lake turnpoint the sink disappeared and some mild lift could be found. I also refined the location of the turn points based on the actual location of the lift.

One surprise that came out from the spreadsheets was that the so much sought after advantage of flying at high altitude was curbed by the fact that one cannot exceed the speed at which flutter may appear. Because this speed is directly related to atmospheric pressure, my speed at altitude had to be reduced by an amount exactly proportional to the gain in speed due to the altitude. I knew that before, but I had forgotten about it. In other words, I could not exceed a given groundspeed, at any altitude above 13,000'. My speed-to-fly came out to be the one corresponding to an expected lift of about 1200 fpm, but in the Cambridge I could set the McCready only to 950 fpm. I had to fly faster than the indication of the instrument, and I decided that I would increase my speed by making an estimate while flying.

Looking north east to the majestic wall formed by a wave cloud in the Minden Valley. An additional layer of air condenses its moisture above the wall in a spot of stronger lift.

Pacific Soaring Council

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Articles and photos are graciously accepted. Please consider sharing your experience with our readers. Send photos and articles to glenncobb@sandyutah.com
High resolution digital photos are preferred.

Thank you!

Glenn Cobb
WestWind
Editor

The limitation to the speed reduced substantially the advantage that I thought I would have by flying at high altitudes, but I had to fly high anyway to be able to go to the Wave Lake point and come back to the wave crossing the mountains surrounding Lake Tahoe. The spreadsheets told me that I would lose between 10,000' and 11,000' during the 8 or 9 minutes spent in sink. Another limitation was due to the fact that at high altitudes in winter it is way too cold to carry water ballast. My dreams of fabulous records were then redimensioned and I limited myself to do just the best I could.

I hope I do not bore anybody with the story of the preparation for the flight but I can assure you that the planning, anticipating and speculating is at least one half of the excitement of searching for a record. My wife, Amy, was shaking her head every time she surprised me working at the spreadsheet, but she has a different point of view.

On April 14, 2002, the forecast was very promising and Minden sported its characteristic lenticular clouds, clear air and pronounced winds of wave days. But the location of the wave was not the same as before: the clouds were two to three miles downwind of where they had been at other times. I did not think about changing the task. It was too difficult to calculate a different one without computer, in the increasing wind and with the haste of starting the task. A mathematical error would be very easy to develop.

The wind speed was expected to increase in the afternoon. That day, Tony Sabino of Soar Minden was my Official Observer. I released low, 1,700' AGL close to the field, as at other times on wave days. I drifted downwind under the lenticulars climbing to 11,000'. From there I went upwind toward the blue, climbing in wave up to 18,000' without leaving the spot where I was. Then I moved, reaching Wave Start at 20,000'. After the start I followed the wave, reaching 20,500' at the Wave Depart. From there I went to Wave Lake, and lost 6500' in 4 minutes before finding out that, surprise, I was in lift! The last 4 miles remaining to the turn point were run at a constant elevation and at reduced speed (about 130 mph groundspeed). I turned Wave Lake at 14,000' and, indulging in the lift, instead of going directly to the Wave Return point I followed a direct line towards Wave Washoe with a ground speed close to 200 mph.

I turned Wave Washoe at 8,600' and went urgently to look for the wave, which was another 2.5 miles downwind. Now the climb began. I had 27 miles to climb straight ahead up to 18,000'. Half way through I was at 16,500', while flying at 110 mph and climbing at 1000 fpm. It was exhilarating but also stressing, having to find the best position in relation to the cloud and with the knowledge that a mistake in locating the wave would mean an immediate loss of altitude and the loss of the record. As it happened, at that point the lift began to lose strength, and strangely enough, notwithstanding the need to use the diminished lift, I had to increase the speed under the command of the speed to fly director. Climbing somewhat nevertheless, I got to Wave Finish at 17,300'. The whole circuit had taken about 36 minutes.

I had anticipated making two runs. I went back to the wave and thought about what to do next. An approximate mental calculation told me that it was a good run and I had abundantly beaten the previous record. I decided that what I had done was all right and decided for a plain repetition of the same task. Starting again but now at 21,000', I reached Wave Depart at 23,000' and began my wave crossing, reaching Wave Lake at 15,000', about 1,000' higher than before. This time my track passed slightly to the west of the previous one, and I reached Wave Washoe at 9,300', about 700' higher than before. It was now easier to catch the wave, with the acquired knowledge and confidence that the task was possible.

I also had the time to observe the situation around me. I was in the blue just ahead of the cloud, the vertical extent of which I could only partially see. There were rotor clouds towards the mountains surrounding Lake Tahoe on my right, and I could see secondary and tertiary waves on my left. The whole Minden Valley was beneath me, illuminated by the crystalline air while I was going up and up in this exhilarating cavalcade, seeing and feeling the power of the wave. My Cambridge is set to display the Netto and the average lift was between 1,200 and 1,400 fpm for several miles. The maximum value I found was 1,700 fpm in the average, for about one minute. This time the halfway point of the last leg was passed at 17,000', with a better guaranty of finishing the task well. I finished at about 18,600', with a total time that looked somewhat better than the first one.

Of course I am reporting all these numbers taking them from the GPS trace. During the flight one has just the lucidity to make an approximate evaluation of what is going on. Most of the attention is dedicated to the speed, the altitude and which way to go in the next minute or so, with a longer plan on where to go and what to do in the next five minutes.

As it came out, the fastest run was the second. Doug Donohue, the Record Keeper for the State of Nevada, evaluated the time on task at 35' 27", which over the task distance of 101.32 km translated to a speed of 171.49 km/h, or 106.56 mph. The existing records for the Standard, 15 m and Open classes were respectively 81.24, 90.51 and 102.36 mph, and I beat them all.

When looking at these high speeds we have to consider that the allowable difference in altitude between the start and arrival point is 1000 m, or 3280', which is a big advantage in a short task like this one. Could I have done better? Of course I could have, there is no limit to improvement, and one big consideration for next time could be to choose a point downwind of the wave rather than upwind like Wave Lake. On the other hand, it is easier to do this kind of judgment after the flight, while looking at the GPS trace. While flying, I could not adequately visualize my actual ground path.

But I liked my flight and I took it. Maybe one day I will do even better.

Landing Out

by Bob (Chukar) Spielman

Our experience in landouts is not as good as it should be. What is a landout? For high performance ships, it's landing at a strange airport. For our club Schweizers it's landing at a non-airport.

Ask Vern Frye or Carl Herold and they will tell you they've lost track of how many landouts they've made. It is part of low performance cross country soaring. We need to be very good at it. We see landouts in alfalfa fields, dirt roads, highways, pastures, and dry and not so dry lake beds. They all are unique and very interesting.

We've damaged several gliders while I've been a member of NSA. The first I remember was a landout on a dirt road in Antelope Valley east of Fred's Mountain. On landing, the wing caught the sagebrush on the side of the road and turned the glider and the sagebrush on a berm. The tail was bent 90 degrees and the glider was totaled. Another was a landing in the middle of Winnemucca "Dry" Lake and the glider was undamaged but the pilot had to be airlifted out by helicopter because he sunk in the mud so far he couldn't walk. The glider was later totaled by a thunderstorm before we could retrieve it. On another flight the pilot was approaching from south of Pyramid Lake and couldn't make it. He passed up Duck Lake thinking he could make Air Sailing but landed in the area between the shooting range and ASI hitting a ditch and did about $5,000 damage. We damaged one on landing on the Pyramid-Gerlach highway because of the plastic road edge markers. We damaged one last year on a runway edge light at Stead and another this year landing downwind on a dirt road north of Rosachi.

We do have many successful landouts in dry lake beds and fields or pastures. Roads have not worked out as well. There are several recurrent themes. Obstacles along the sides of roads, bermed roadsides, and downwind conditions resulting in loss of directional control.

When I was at the 1-26 Goalstrike at Jean, Nevada, I was surprised to find that they used gravel pits for some of their emergency fields. That got me thinking that maybe we look for a long straight place to put our wheels when we should look for a place to put our wings as well. The gravel pits which have been selected are pretty small, but usually about as wide as they are long, so directional control on rollout is not critical. Our smallest glider, the 1-26, has a wing span of 40 feet and a low time pilot can stop it on landing in around 400 to 500 ft from the touchdown spot. This is a little more than about twice the length of the tow rope. I measured the pavement on Winnemucca Ranch Rd and it's 22' wide with metal markers 2' either side so there is only 26' of clearance. This is about standard for a major paved two lane road – it is sometimes less. These make a very poor choice for a landout spot. The dirt portion of the Winnemucca Ranch Road near Airsailing is around 36' wide with another 10' of ditch to the berm and sagebrush on each side for a total of 56' so that's landable, provided you are able to maintain very good directional control all the way to a stop. But only 8 ft of divergence will stick your wing tip in the rough and you ground loop through the ditch and berm.

So my point is when you need a landout spot, look for a place which accommodates your wings and is not so demanding with respect to directional control. Dry lakes, hay fields, even short sagebrush. Trailering home your undamaged ship is a perfectly acceptable solution to running out of lift.

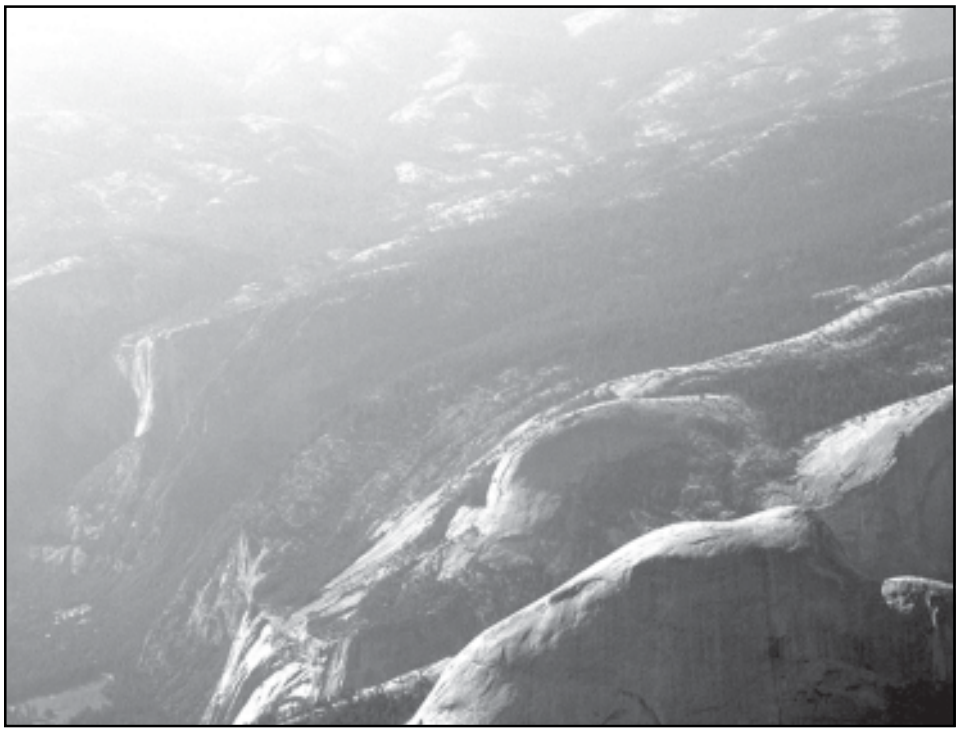
Dry lakes are one of the best landout spots we have. If you land on a dry lake look it over while you still have a little altitude. Look for wheel tracks and land right down them. If cars do not sink there, gliders won't either. Also look for a road coming down to the dry lake as that will make a vehicle retrieve easier. With no other signs, land near the edge, and avoid dark soil as well as extremely white "salt looking" spots. Dark color can signal wet soil and the really white salt precipitate signals wet conditions beneath. LANDING NEAR THE EDGE does a couple of things for you. 1.It's usually a little higher and drier than the center; 2.You will gain depth perception from the sagebrush and weeds along the edge which will help you in estimating your height during landing. Do not go beyond the edge, however, as it often is very sandy, soft and not as smooth a surface (desert), in addition to the increasing density of obstacles.

Fly Safe!
Chukar

Air Sailing and headquarters for NSA (Nevada Soaring Association) - photo by Dale Thompson

Flight from Hollister to Truckee

Monday, 09/01/2003.
Five hours and 49 minutes
49 mph average.
My unplanned flight across the Sierras from Hollister.



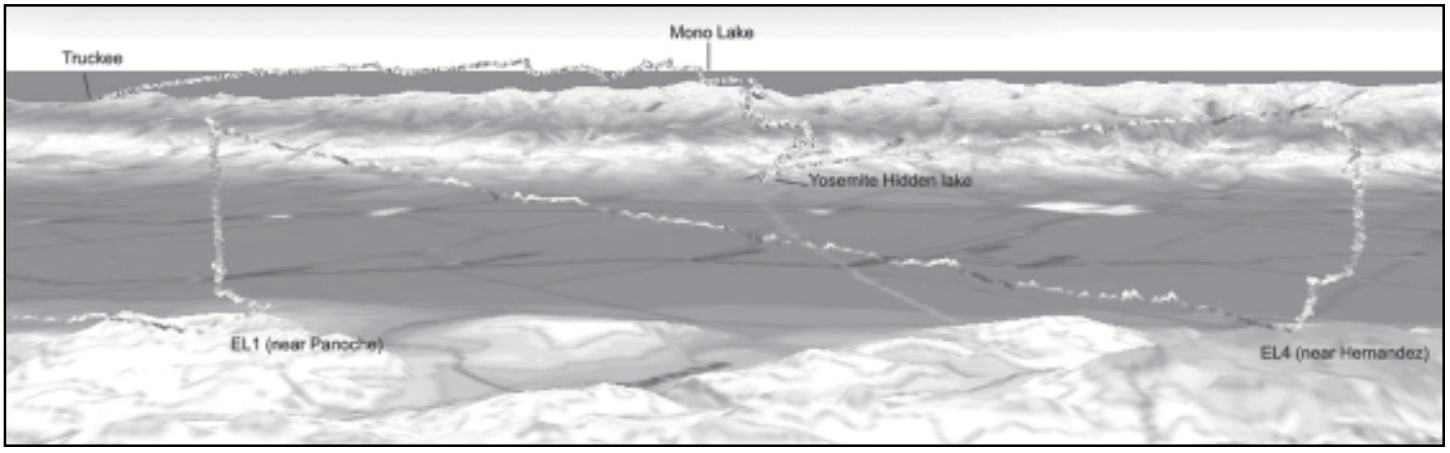
Half Dome

by Brian Choate, DG3

I watched the weather on the labor day weekend, and Sunday looked good. With a low pressure moving in slowly and Monday temps higher, Monday Avenal TIP confirmed it with 12k predicted. Ramy, David, and I showed up to fly on Monday. We planned the usual Panoche, Black Mountain run and Ramy towed first. The lift was great and I towed next. I arrived at EL1 (near Panoche) just over the ridges and took one good thermal to 11,000 feet. I flew directly to EL4 (near Hernandez) where I stopped for my second good thermal. At this point Ramy had continued into the blue toward Black where he reported about 8,500ft. and not the best lift. Ramy talked about the great cloud street over the sierras and we wondered how close it was. It looked like the clouds were closer than the mountains. As I approached 12,000ft under the cloud I decided what the heck, I'll give it a try, I told Ramy what I had decided, and he offered to retrieve me if I landed in the valley. So off I went. As soon as I left the thermal over EL4 the air was still, just like the marine layer near Hollister. I had a light tail wind. The crossing took some time, and half way across at 6,000ft the clouds did not look any bigger. I now felt I had no chance to get over but continued in case I found some low thermals in the valley. I arrived a few miles from the foothills at 1,600 agl with Yosemite Hidden Lake strip in glide and in sight.

Keeping the strip in glide I glided closer to the foothills and the bumps started, I found some light thermals about 1-2 kts to start with. I patiently worked them until I gained 1,000ft. Then I moved over Yosemite Hidden Lake. With the 5-7kt west wind I predicted the dam and lake would make a great thermal trigger. Sure enough I found a 4 kt thermal over there and worked it gaining another 1000ft or so.

As I worked more thermals I drifted deeper into the Sierras, each time stepping up and further in. I played it conservative as the terrain was VERY intimidating. I set my winpilot to 90% bugs which gave me 26:1 glide and I had 1,000 pattern alt on top of it. In addition, I always kept 2000ft above glide back to Yosemite Hidden Lake strip (my only landing option) this gave me a total of 3000ft arrival alt at anytime using 26:1. I tip toed from thermal to thermal toward Oakhurst. The clouds on



Half way across Lake Tahoe

the Sierras were now obviously on the crest and miles away! But I noticed some smaller clouds scattered and some shadows about 10 miles ahead. I stumbled across an unknown short paved strip about 15nm NE of Yosemite hidden lake strip.

I found a stronger thermal here about 4 kts and climbed to 8,200ft, I then crossed over Oakhurst and noticed a golf course that I would use in an emergency.

I was getting real close to the 1st wisps now about five miles away, and reported to Ramy that it now may be possible to connect. Unfortunately it was now too late in the day for Ramy to join me as he had been waiting about two hours at Hernandez as I kept him updated on my progress.

I Now had Mariposa in glide even though I could not see it as it was way down a canyon. I had flown in there with a Cessna a couple of years ago, so I was comfortable with where it was. I also spent some time in Yosemite village and had checked out the fields there (landable in an absolute emergency). This made me fly closer to half dome and Yosemite Village.

I finally broke through the inversion and connected with some real lift near half dome, connecting with the clouds and climbing to 15,000ft. Now I could breath a sigh of relief as the streets ahead looked easy to complete the crossing to Lee Vining.

I didn't have to turn much to Lee Vining. What a feeling of exhilaration when Mono lake came into view. The clouds streeting was well connected and looked great to Patterson, Pine Nuts and the Whites.

The wind had now changed as I crossed the Sierras and headed from Bridgeport. I found a 9-12 kt south wind and the cloud street was not working at all. I changed gears and flew conservatively past Bridgeport where I finally connected with a good one. I believe the wind had washed out the lift from the Mono Lake effect. I was able to stay high past Patterson and arrived at the last clouds in the street over Freel Peak.

Since it was late in the day, I could only get to about 13,000ft a few miles south of Freel. I crossed Freel at 12,800ft and with a tail wind, I had the gap on the other side of Lake Tahoe made with 2,000ft. Still a bit intimidating, since this was my first lake crossing in a 15m ship. I landed at Truckee and tied down. Yee ha!

Note: *Thanks to Eulee and his wife for inviting me to dinner at Truckee, and thanks to Matt (W4) for the updated conditions in the sierras. To Drew for letting me use the RV for the night. Thanks to all my good teachers, Russell, Ramy, Drew, Carl Herold, Peter Deane and Gavin Wills!*

Brian Chote, DG3

Moni Lake

2003 PASCO SOARING SEMINAR & ANNUAL BANQUET

Saturday November 8, 2003

at the
Hiller Aviation Museum
(*San Carlos Airport*)
601 Skyway Road
San Carlos, CA 94070
Phone: (650)-654-0200
http://www.Hiller.org

Hotel rooms available at a discount rate.
Ask for the PASCO discount.

Safety Seminar
9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Program TBA

Banquet and Awards Ceremony
Museum Tour: 5:00 – 7:00
No host bar: 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.
Dinner: 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Dinner speaker:

Chris Woods
Renowned Bay Area Aviation Cinematographer & Contest Pilot
Also speaking will be *Greg "Shifty" Gears* from the Top Gun Naval Training Center in Nevada

Dinner price is $38 with RSVP, or $40 at the door.
Please indicate beef or chicken when making reservations.

To make a reservation for the seminar, contact Chris de Roulet by email at PASCOSafetySeminar@Yahoo.com ; if you are also planning on attending the Awards Banquet, please RSVP to Chris de Roulet by telephone at (925)-639-1110 no later than November 1, 2003.

Calendar of Events

November 8
PASCO Awards Banquet and Safety Seminar. See page nine for details.

Charitable Giving

Consider a provision in your will to include a monetary donation that equals your enjoyment of "The King of Sports" PASCO is a 503 c(3) not for profit corporation and contributions are tax deductible.

PASCO and the FAA to invite 10,000 Bay Area power pilots to attend the PASCO Safety Seminar

The FAA will be sending out 10,000 invitations to local Bay Area power pilots to attend the PASCO November 8, 2003 Safety Seminar and Awards Banquet at the Hiller Aviation Museum located at the San Carlos airport in the Bay Area. There are many common safety concerns for both the power and glider communities. The FAA has realized this and is supporting PASCO's efforts to reach out to the power community to expose them the art of soaring through our safety seminar.

There will be two training tracks for the safety seminar. The Power Pilot track will be oriented towards exposing pilots to typical safety topics for the glider community that will be new to them, such as blip maps and weather forecasting, flight physiology, bailout procedures and survival to name a few. At the same time, soaring oriented seminars will be conducted for the glider pilot covering such topics as new technology for improved soaring, high altitude flight considerations, weather forecasting and other soaring related topics.

If you know a power pilot that has been interested in soaring, this is the seminar for them. Many power pilots have done the $100 airport hamburger flights and are now looking for new flying experiences. PASCO is seeking to reach those individuals to add to our soaring community, help strengthen our FBOs and their training programs and add to our local club memberships. The cost of the seminar is $10 to cover room costs and includes admission to the museum.

IF YOU ARE ATTENDING, PLEASE BE SURE TO RSVP FOR BOTH THE AWARDS BANQUET AND THE SAFETY SEMINARS. BOTH EVENTS ARE ON A FIRST COME, FIRST SERVE BASIS. PLEASE SEE OUR ADD IN THIS ISSUE.

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ASW-24 (LL), 1988, excellent condition, 870 hrs, Maumgher winglets with wheels, tinted canopy, oxygen, Dittel radio, Sage vario, Cambridge GPS and L-Nav, Terra transponder, Cobra trailer with tow-out equipment, other extras. Financially motivated to sell. Karol 415-845-3002, KaroLL@sbcglobal.net

SOARING WEATHER WEB-URL SITES

Compiled by Doug Armstrong

http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/reno/...NWSFO Reno home page/additional wx data
http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/reno/javapg/soaring/index.html...NWSFO Reno soaring/index
http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/reno/RNOSAFRNO.txt...NWSFO Reno soaring forecast
http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/reno/javapg/satellite/index.html...weather satellite index & loop
http://weather.unisys.com/satellite/sat_ir_enh_west.html...wx sat/infrared mode (IR)
http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/reno/javapg/satellite/GOES_West/4km_wvimage_Jhtm...4km WV
http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/reno/javapg/satellite/GOES_West/16km_irimage.htm...16km IR
http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/reno/javapg/satellite/GOES_West/1km_visimage.htm...1km VIS
http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/reno/javapg/satellite/GOES_West/1km_visloop.htm...VIS loop
http://www-das.uwyo.edu/upperair/sounding.html...current atmospheric soundings/map
http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/reno/javapg/radar/index.shtml...Local/Regional radar data
http://grads.iges.org/pix/mrf.vort.html...MRF extended forecast model
http://www.edwards.af.mil/weather/mrfmodel.htm...MRF model output
http://www.wrcc.dri.edu/weather/sage.html...DRI-Stead remote weather data
http://www.wrcc.dri.edu/weather/slide.html...DRI-Slide Mt. Remote weather data
http://virga.sfsu.edu/gif/jetstream_pac_init_00.gif...SFO State 300 mb Jet-stream
http://rap.ucar.edu/weather/upper/ua300mb.gif...UCAR 300 mb Jet-stream

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The data from these web-url sites with a brief description can be reviewed on a daily basis by any soaring pilot or soaring meteorologist in preparation for soaring flights in the western states. Most of these Internet sites are used in a soaring forecast overview prepared by Doug Armstrong...Soaring Meteorology updated April 17th, 2001...inquiries can be addressed to this email <skybird98@aol.com>

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Membership requirements are private pilot certificate in gliders, checkout with an approved instructor, and initiation fee. Pilots using gliders for cross-country must meet certain minimum requirements.

Use of Mode C Transponders

PASCO Recommends the Use of Mode C Transponders Near Reno

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. New transponders have recently gone on the market with size and power requirements more suitable for glider operation.

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

Read the informative article: "Gliders With and Without Transponders in the Reno ATC Area" - by Carl Herold, posted on the Minden Soaring Club Web site: http:/www.mindensoaringclub.org/.

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