



WEST WIND

April 2000



JJ's Super Albatross just about ready for fabric cover – *See story on page 8*

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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 1999. Current dues are \$25 annually from the month after receipt of payment.

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National Weather Service, Reno
800 WX-BRIEF (##318) (775) 858-1300 (##318)

Sierra Highway Information

Auburn - 702 793-1313
Reno - 775 793-1313 Truckee - 775 793-1313

Volume 35, No (4) (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

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Air Sailing, Inc. Airport David Volkmann 530-246-7559

Attitude Aviation 299 W. Jack London Blvd.
Livermore, CA 94550, (925) 456-2276

Central California Soaring Club Avenal Gliderport -
1747 Bobolink Ln., Fresno, CA 93727 209-251-7933

Chico Soaring Association (CSA) - Orland Airport, Orland,
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Crazy Creek Soaring 18896 Grange Road, P.O. Box 575,
Middletown, CA 95461, 707-987-9112

High Country Soaring Douglas County Airport, P.O. Box
70, Minden, NV 89423, 775-782-4944

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Northern California Soaring Association (NCSA) Byron
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Soar Minden Douglas County Airport, P.O. Box 1764,
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Soar Truckee, Inc. P.O. Box 2657, Truckee Airport, CA
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Williams Soaring Center 2668 Husted Road, Williams,
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<http://www.williamssoaring.com/>

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port, Hollister, CA; Truckee Airport, Truckee, CA; Dou-
glas County Airport, Minden, NV. Contact Stan Davies,
(408) 238-2880.

Central California Soaring Club Avenal Gliderport,
Avenal, CA. Contact Mario Crosina, 1747 Bobolink Lane,
Fresno, CA (209) 251-7933.

Chico Soaring Association (CSA) - Orland Airport, Orland,
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ehinkle@aol.com

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

Las Vegas Valley Soaring Association - Jean Air-
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702-874-1420, elmimi@aol.com

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 Stew Tittle, 541-
882-1550, N64UW@aol.com

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

Northern California Soaring Association (NCSA) Byron
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Silverado Soaring Association - Crazy Creek Gliderport,
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(916) 966-4038

Valley Soaring Association (VSA) - 2668 Husted Road,
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WORLD WIDE WEB ADDRESSES - REGION 11

SOARING SOCIETY OF AMERICA <http://www.ssa.org>

PACIFIC SOARING COUNCIL <http://www.ranlog.com/pasco/index.html>

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CENTRAL CALIFORNIA SOARING CLUB <http://www.psnw.com/~alcald/ccsc.html>

CHICO SOARING ASSOCIATION http://www.syix.com/clarkaw/csa_home.html

MINDEN SOARING CLUB <http://www.community.net/~soaring/msc.html>

MOUNT SHASTA SOARING CENTER <http://www.community.net/~soaring/mssc.html>

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WILLIAMS SOARING CENTER <http://www.williamssoaring.com/>

VALLEY SOARING ASSOCIATION <http://www.community.net/~soaring/>

Minutes of the PASCO Board of Directors

Minutes of the
PASCO Board of Directors
March 6, 2000

ATTENDEES: Sumner Davis, Charlie Hayes, Rosemary Hayes, Dick Horn, Fran Allender, Sergio Colacevich, Tony Gaechter, Bruce Roberts.
GUEST: Bob Korves

MINUTES: Minutes from February meeting accepted

TREASURER'S REPORT: No report

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

PUBLICATIONS: Advertisements in *WestWind* are currently \$10 per month for 35 words. Karol Hines has been collecting payment for the display ads. Bruce will contact Karol concerning collection for ads in the future.

AWARDS: No report

MEMBERSHIP: No report

FAA LIAISON: John Sinclair was contacted by the FAA concerning the wave window at Montague. The board agreed that the window should be open. The Center number to call to open the wave window at Montague is 253 - 351-3523. Dale Bush and Rex Mayes should be contacted with the phone information.

PASCO LEAGUE: Tony discussed an umbrella insurance policy. It would be too costly and only offers slip and fall, but not aircraft crash coverage. Tony will seek legal consultation with Bruce Laxalt and Paul deMeester on "Pilot Entry/Waiver Form". BASA put up a website of its PASCO League team.

COMPETITION: Sumner passed along information reported by Steve Smith that a consortium of glider enthusiasts will be sponsoring a contest at Tonopah this summer.

Steve also recommended that PASCO get involved in the Minden contest site improvement for the 2001 Nationals. The west side closed runway is no longer available for contest tie downs. An improvement of the east side closed runway for glider contest operations needs to be undertaken. This includes improvement of access to the east side. Steve recommends funding from PASCO to assist Douglas County Airport in this process in order to keep Minden on the SSA favored status list for national contests. The board decided not to commit funds at this time. It was noted that the Mount Shasta Soaring Group will be having a competition at Montague this summer.

SAWYER AWARD: Sergio consulted with David Volkmann, Rolf Peterson, and Peter Kelly concerning motor glider

rules. The board decided to accept Sergio's revised rules concerning pure gliders and take up discussion of motor gliders at the next meeting.

SAFETY: There will be a Safety Clinic at Williams on March 25-26, 2000. A Soaring Safety Seminar will be held at Hollister Gilding Club on April 16 with Bob Wander, Jim Payne, George Thelen and Dave Penning. SSA re-validation CFIG will be April 17 and 18 at Hollister.

NEW BUSINESS: Mike Shuster's resignation as a PASCO Director was accepted. Board members were asked to look over the member list and have nominations for a new director at the April meeting. Sumner will approach members who have not previously served.

Fran Allender will speak with Buchanan Field representative with regard to retaining the board meeting location.

OLD BUSINESS: Carl Herold and company had a successful seminar at Berkeley. Approximately 100 people were in attendance.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m..

TREASURER'S REPORT April 3, 2000

Checking beginning balance
\$14,304.86

Ending Balance-March 15, 2000
\$13,299.86

*Deposits-March 30, 2000
\$ 1,180.00

New Balance-as of
March 30, 2000
\$14,479.86

Savings balance
March 15, 2000
\$ 2,939.74

Scholarship Fund
December 31, 1999
\$ 5,421.00

*CHECKING ACCOUNT DEPOSITS:
Membership
\$795.00

PASCO Turn Point Book Sales
\$385.00

CHECKING ACCOUNT
WITHDRAWAL:
WestWind \$1,005.00

Some changes coming up for the soaring forecast

by Doug Armstrong

Automation is bringing changes to the National Weather Service soaring forecast, but they are trying their best to maintain the integrity of the product.

The Showalter Index and Vertical Totals Index are being dropped. These indices were mainly used by the meteorologist to determine the conditional stability changes going on in the atmosphere.

They are able to continue the Soaring Index as projected from the Reno raob. I'm thankful for this. When I was working on a soaring forecast, especially for a contest, I actually looked at all the Indices in CA,OR,ID,UT,AZ as well as NV. I've also computed the Soaring Index from all of those surrounding raob sites in nearby states. That was a handful.

In conclusion: the Soaring Forecast continues with some minor changes. For more detailed info pilots can call up plotted raob soundings.

The new WEB address for the soaring forecast:
<http://nimbo.wrh.noaa.gov/reno/RNOSAFRNO.txt>.

The new WEB address for the raob soundings:
<http://www.das.uwo.edu/upperair/sounding.html>

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- Gliders based at various locations, giving variety to your flying and taking advantage of gliderports seasonal conditions.

For additional information contact:

Doug Lent, (916)966-4038, dlent@aol.com

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Minisafetytips

Flying Cross Country in the coast range

The Pacific Coast Range runs from Los Angeles to Seattle for more than 1,000 miles. But I am referring here to the mountain range that starts from the latitude of Vacaville-Santa Rosa and continues north for about 140 miles to the Yolla Bolly wilderness area, west of Red Bluff. Many more gliders fly here than in other coastal ranges of California, because of the vicinity of the densely populated Bay Area. This flying area widens at the latitude of Calistoga and the Clear Lake and narrows toward the north end. It is confined in the west by the cool and stable air close to the ocean, and in the east by the Sacramento Valley air, often too hot to be good from a soaring point of view.

When we were flying out of the Lagoon Valley Airport near Vacaville, we were making good use of the Blue Ridge that runs north for 60 miles up to the intersection with Highway 20 west of the town of Williams. Several times I used it to come back to Vacaville in the evening, when a constant west wind would make the ridge an expressway for gliders. In other days of poor thermals but with the constant bay breeze characteristic of this area, we could gain some practice during winter times.

To fly this ridge safely one has always to keep open an escape route toward the east, because the west side is unlandable for the most part. This does not mean that one has always to be higher than the ridge, but that one must be high enough to pass through the openings on it, most notably the gap at the Berryessa dam, and the Rumsey gap where the Cache Creek cuts through. The best placed runway here is the one a few miles south of the town of Guinda in the

Capay Valley. It is not easy to spot from the ridge, but it becomes more evident when getting closer to it. It is parallel to the road in a north-south direction, with a sparkling white building on the north end.

But the ridge is so good here that I never heard of anybody using that runway, although several landings, including some of mine, have been done in other parts of the valley. I would encourage everybody to make use of this ridge, which is so reliable although at first sight intimidating. It becomes somewhat weaker north of the Rumsey gap. Before allowing myself to descend to ridge level, I assess the direction and strength of the wind from the wavelets in the Berryessa Lake. A wind direction up to 30 degrees with the perpendicular to the ridge produces good lift.

The area of Crazy Creek and Calistoga is a pleasure to fly, being in somewhat higher ground, panoramic, with good thermals and well distributed airports. Some caution should be exercised on estimating the distance from the airports. The area around the clearly visible mines, east of Crazy Creek, is somewhat out of reach of landing strips - especially now that the Pearce Airport, at the south end of the Clear Lake, is no more in use.

In the general area east of Crazy Creek there is often a very active shear line, created by strongly different air masses. Its location varies and generally moves from west to east during the day, producing strong lift and high thermals. The hazard here is that the clouds are so attractive that one may desire them too much, to the point of getting low while attempting to reach them.

This area is also blessed by waves in the winter season. A very nice wave is produced in the lee of Mount St. Elena. This wave is easy to locate and safe to ride, being just upwind of the Calistoga Airport. With the necessary altitude, the airport of Crazy Creek can be reached

from here too. Other waves are around Crazy Creek, at times just above the airport. Most commonly the wave is on the lee of Cobb Mountain. In this area, an eye must be always kept open to a safe escape, a thing which is common to all wave situations. In the Crazy Creek area the waves are produced by north winds, in the Williams area by west winds.

North of Clear Lake and the Indian Valley Reservoir, that is where the serious flying begins. This is a mountainous area in all respects, with altitudes over 7,000', peaking to 8,000'. One of the preferred approaches to this area is from the west slope of Goat Mountain, at elevation 6121', sporting the M-14 watch tower. This slope is a formidable producer of thermals, exposed as it is to the sun and the wind of the afternoon. It has a little defect: The valley on the west is unlandable, and the escape on the east may not be possible below a certain elevation. In this case, the only option consists in landing in the Indian Valley Reservoir.

To fly this ridge safely one has always to keep open an escape route toward the east, because the west side is unlandable for the most part.

sible below a certain elevation. In this case, the only option consists in landing in the Indian Valley Reservoir.

A few years ago Tim Taylor, a pilot who now flies in the East, landed in the reservoir at a time

when the lake was completely dry. Everything went fine apart from a 2-hour walk looking for help. Today there is water in the reservoir, and a landing can be done there with controlled consequences. The choice to land in water is a good one, as no permanent damage will be incurred by the glider, and certainly much safer to the pilot than other choices.

From Goat Mountain to the Yolla Bolly Wilderness there are 70 miles of mountainous environment. Often the thermals here reach 10,000' to 14,000', with good strength, making the trip pleasant and impressive. In other days we have to struggle at lower elevations, with few clouds and rough thermals. If the lift is lost, the escape is equally safe to both sides of the divide. To the east

one can count on the Gravelly Valley and Round Valley Airports.

At Gravelly Valley Airport the best approach is from the mountain landing upwind in the direction of the lake. The strip is made of gravel and is very long and wide. It has a considerable slope, close to 2%, in direction of the lake. If you do not open the airbrakes you will overfly it all, up to the lake. In the last quarter mile of the runway there are crossing vehicles, watch for them, and there are people camping and fishing close to the lake, watch for them. Better land short so you'll be ready for the aerotow, because pushing the glider uphill in the gravel is pretty heavy. But, near the lake there are people and they can help you.

On the east side of the mountains it is easy to reach the Sacramento Valley which has several airports, many uncharted strips, and many large fields. To choose which side to abandon the mountains depends which airport you started from, or which one you want to go to.

I consider flying in this coast range an overall safe activity. But of course safety depends on ourselves, rather than on our surroundings.

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.

PASCO

...is a non-profit, 501(c)3 corporation. Our purpose is to initiate, sponsor, promote and carry out plans, policies and activities that will further the education and development of soaring pilots.

Contributions to PASCO are tax deductible under current IRS laws. For more information about making a donation to PASCO, contact your membership chair.

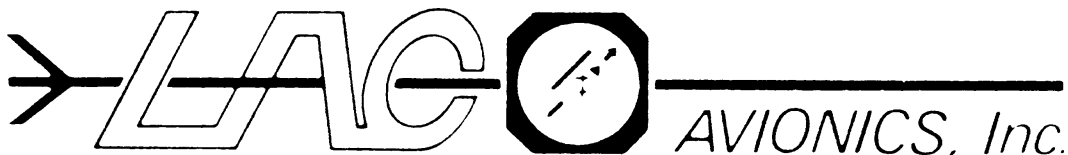
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A 50-year dream come true

by John "JJ" Sinclair

I flew the Bowlus Super Albatross on the first of March at Orland, California. There are now three of these beautiful ships, two in museums in Elmira, NY and the Bay Area, but this is the only one flying.

I saw one fly at Torrey Pines 50 years ago. It's an itch I finally scratched. The ship I copied flew at Arvin 60 years ago.

I've built it from scratch over 20 years. The pod, boom and tail feathers are from a Baby Albatross, and there are plans for them. But the outer wing panels are from an Super Albatross and there are no plans for the wings. We had to do a little engineering, but I got help from Stan Hall and Irv Colver and Jim Moffat.

On the test flight, everything went well. I took three auto tows up to 70 mph in order to establish maximum tow speed, then towed behind the Williams Pawnee to 4,000 feet. No problem on tow at 65 mph as I had plenty of forward stick available.

The ship handles great, very responsive but not nervous. I have, however, reduced the rudder throw to 20 degrees. I think that enormous rudder was needed on the Baby but is too much on the faster Super.

She stalls at 37 and feels firm at 70. I think a VNE of 80 should be as fast as we ever need to go. The neutral elevator speed is 40. I will move the CG forward to



2.656 inches tall by
3.75 inches wide

Is this a model?

mph.

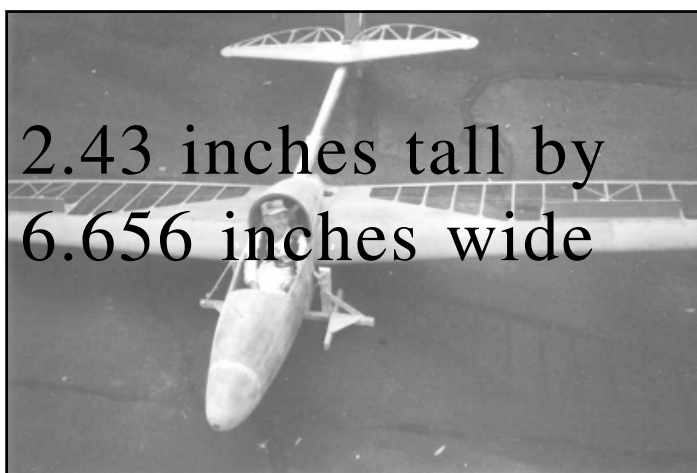
On April 8, I went on a little 75-mile cross-country out of Orland and

got to 8,000 feet. I'm thinking about competition, maybe at Air Sailing, maybe the Sports Class Nationals. I even put oxygen in it. The CH handicap is 1.74. So with the ASH-25, I'm at both ends of the handicap spectrum.

The plane was well received at the SSA National Convention in New Mexico. We hung it from the ceiling in order to get the gossamer look of light shining through clear doped fabric.

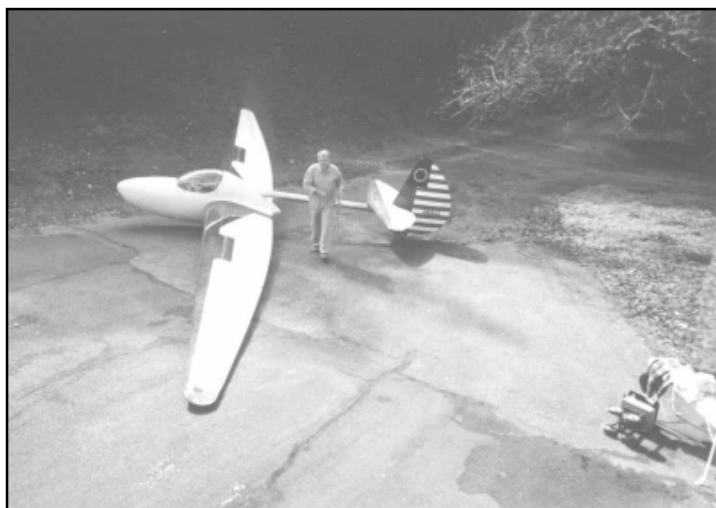
I gave a slide presentation at the Vintage Sailplane Association luncheon.

John Sinclair of Placerville, Calif., started soaring 30 years ago and has 3,500 hours in gliders. He has made 1000K twice and takes considerable pride in having flown his Silver, Gold and Diamond badges in a wooden sailplane, a Duster that he built. He is a partner in an ASH-25. During a 22-year career as bombardier and navigator in the Air Force, beginning with B-29s and B-52s, he flew F-4s and F-111s. He operated a glider repair station for 20 years.



2.43 inches tall by
6.656 inches wide

about 30 percent of MAC on the next flight. I would like a neutral elevator speed of 50 mph. I was even able to climb 300 feet in a very weak thermal. The dive brakes added 300 fpm to the descent to give 500 fpm down on final approach flown at 50, with touch down at 40. The big rudder was nice for turning off the runway. I turned 30 degrees right at 10



Arvin Remembrance

by "Old Dog" Emil Kissel

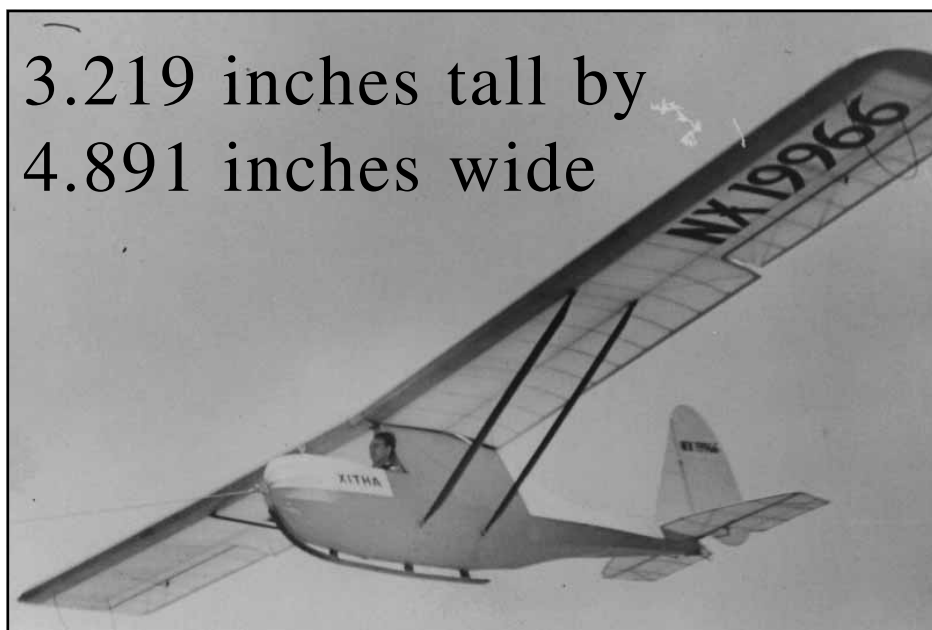
This ship, named Xitha by the wife of Herman Gerboth, which I remember meaning 'Golden Eagle' in the Indian language, was considered a 'secondary' glider of medium performance. We never knew who designed it or partially built it. Gerboth and I flew it in the 1940 Arvin contest. Dick Johnson and Dave Johnson were the crew.

I was a student at Boeing School of Aeronautics at Oakland Airport, and I flew the primary gliders of the Northern California Soaring Association at Livermore on weekends in 1939.

When Gerboth acquired the partially completed glider, we agreed that I would get flying time in exchange for the welding and other work. One of the mysteries we had to solve were no fittings for the bottoms

of the wing struts to attach to the fuselage. So we neophytes designed and welded them to the fuselage. Lucky for us, the wings never came off.

On completion, the ship was flown at Tracy Airport and soared once at Gobblers Knob above the farm field at Livermore. Variometers, airspeed indicators or altimeters were considered very sophisticated and expensive and if present, very rudimentary. Primaries had none.



Xitha secondary glider flown at Arvin contest 1940

Other ships in our area were a long-wing Albatross, flown infrequently by a man named Gough, and *Valiant Lady* flown by Rod Doyle and Les Arnold. Dick Johnson had flown a primary at the future Moffett

Field and completed his kit-built Baby Albatross in time to compete in the 1940 National Contest at Elmira, New York. I believe he finished sixth. Nobody had much money in those days, so great cooperation existed.

As I remember the Arvin contest, the Los Angeles and San Diego groups were much further advanced than we were, including Stan Hall, Sven Ingels, Johnny Robinson and Woody Brown. They were flying thermals! This was still a great mystery.

Hawley Bowlus was way out there in design, construction and flight. His son, Jack Bowlus, has 8mm movies of the Lindbergs soaring. There were cross-country flights out of Arvin in 1940. Someone got to the Mojave Desert, as I remember it. Loops were a great thing and the records may have reached 100.

During this era, East Coast gliding was centered in Elmira, and the Westerners were not held in high esteem until Johnny Robinson and Dick Johnson started winning contests and the Zanonias and the RJ-5 designs set world standards. Harry Perl and Don Mitchell had a world-class design in their motorglider, Hummingbird, powered by Ted Nelson's certificated two-stroke engine.

Emil Kissel of Saratoga, California, served as SSA governor for northern California from about 1970 to 1980. He has been a glider pilot since 1939 and a member of the Bay Area Soaring Association for 25 years. He built a DFS Meise "Olympia" from 1940 to 1945. He was a Pan American Airlines flight engineer from 1940 to 1979 and then had a second career as a science teacher.

Don't miss this nostalgic event

- When, where: April 29 at Arvin and Tehachapi gliderports, Calif, at the southern end of the Sierra Nevada mountains.

- Why: The Arvin site is being dedicated as National Landmark of Soaring No. 10 by the SSA and National Soaring Museum in association with the Sailplane Homebuilders Association and Arvin 2000 Committee. Arvin was the "Wasserkuppe" of the western United States, giving birth to many WWII and civilian pilots and was the inspiration for many aircraft designers and constructors. It hosted the annual West Coast Soaring Championships from 1937-1941.

- Events: a glider mail flight re-enactment, the landmark dedication, glider flying, a vintage glider regatta, barbecue and banquet.

- Information: visit the website, <http://tehachapi.com/arvingliderport> or call Janice Armstrong, 661-822-8852. The website has suggestions for accommodations.

I have to land!

by Nevin Nyswonger (2N)

As I turned onto downwind leg, it felt like the bottom fell out. A quick glance at the airspeed indicator alarmed me: my airspeed dropped from 65 knots to 45 knots in the matter of a few seconds. My variometer was pegged to the max on the down side. The ground was coming up fast.

I turned onto base leg, still coming down like a rock, airspeed still 45 knots. I have to clear some power lines and a fence. I need to get my speed up or I become a passenger. I think I have the field made, but this descent was more that I think I can handle. I was 4,500 feet above ground level and now in a minute or less, down to 1,500 feet agl. I have to land and do it now.

It was Aug. 22, 1999. This was my 502nd flight with 645 total glider hours. Second year in my DG101 and I still felt like a beginner.

The Soaring Weather Forecast called for unstable air mass over the Sierra Nevada mountains, scattered -

thunderstorms with 35-knot gusts and SE winds to 5 knots for afternoon winds. The day started with high cirrus and didn't look all that great, but I found that the lift was very good right off tow at Truckee-Tahoe Airport, California.

The conditions looked better to the north, so a few pilots and I decided to make a loop from Truckee to Nervino (Beckwourth) and back. I was able get an early start and headed north to Sierraville. I hung out over Sierra Buttes and Gold Lake, waiting for others to come along. The view was outstanding all along the Sierra. Mt. Lassen to the northwest looked very reachable, approximately 111 miles northwest of Truckee.

Prospects of a great soaring day

I could hear "5 Hotel" with Bob Korves and Dieter Lezius,. "Delta Delta" with Dean Aldinger and Steve Mc Robert, "TAZ" with Doug Lent and "Delta Lima" with Bill Ludlow, all on their way to Mt. Lassen. It was not very hard to make a decision to head north. The lift looked better with lots of scattered Cu's. This summer I had made it up to the ridge just east of Quincy, but never as far as Mt Lassen. It is always an adventure to extend your cross-country flights and expand your skills, especially on

such a spectacular day.

The thermals are getting strong and well marked by the Cu's. This was "no brainer" cruising straight with some thermaling and then right over the middle of Lake Almanor. Mt. Lassen now really stands out on the horizon. Chester Airport is on the north end of the lake and about 20 miles south of Mt. Lassen. This was awesome!

I kept on cruising and following DD and TAZ over the top and around the dormant volcano. We had hiked to the top many times but it wasn't like this. What a view right on top. Now we are going around Mt. Lassen and heading back towards Truckee.

But now the weather changed along with the view. The fair-weather Cu's had organized into major over-development along the spine of the Sierra. The lift was still very good and we were cruising south at about 90 knots most of the way to the ridge just east of Quincy. 5H was ahead and working his way back, detouring to the east and towards Stead Airport. Jan Driessen of Soar Truckee got on the radio and warned that there was a major T-storm in the vicinity and that this was not a good time to be flying around the Truckee area.

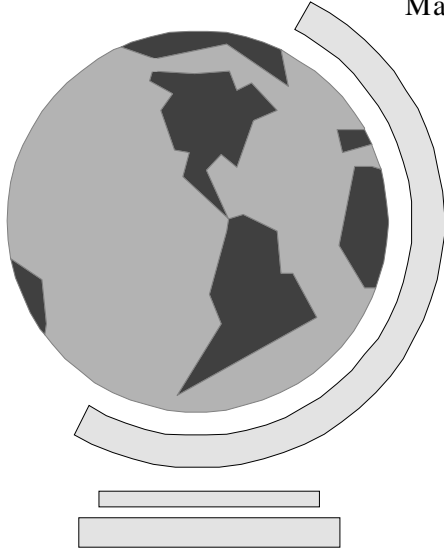
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After some tense moments, the DG 101 is safe in a field near Sierraville. Photo by Nevin Nyswonger.

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Suddenly, the weather changes

DD and TAZ went west of the storm. Later, we could hear Doug say that he “did not like being in all this rain, hail and lightning.” He said, “I’m going east to Nervino.” Since I lost sight of them some time earlier, I was surprised to see I was just a little northeast of their location. There were sheets and veils of rain over Davis Lake extending east of the main storm.

In order to get around the rain, I had to go back to the ridge east of Quincy and get a little higher to detour around the rain and get to Nervino. The storm was very mature and from my vantage point east and above cloud base, I could see the lightning strikes hitting the mountain just north of Portola one right after another. The clouds were black and things were happening.

I kept asking myself, “Which way is this T-storm going?” I was 13,500 feet msl over Nervino, but I did not want to land at this airport. This monster of a storm was just off the west end of the runway. Which way should I go? AirSailing and Stead didn’t look as threatening, but, they are more than 30 miles to the east and you have to cross Peterson Ridge to get there. To the west was no-man’s land. Sierraville Airport was just 16 miles to the south, just east and parallel to the storm, plus TAZ and DD were going that way.

I decided to head south towards Sierraville, with 8500 feet agl of altitude to cover 16 miles. I thought this was a good choice. Normally, it takes about 3000+ feet to cover this distance with a little head wind.

Occasionally, we heard from 5H and DL. They were working their way around the storm going east towards the Loyalton direction, working to get back to Truckee.

Turbulence hits

The flight was a little rough and turbulent but altitude loss was reasonable. Then the turbulence started to get very rough. I tightened up the belts even tighter, turned the oxygen up and slowed my airspeed down to 60 knots. I used to enjoy a little shake, but this was not fun. Fortu-

nately, there was very little roll but a lot of up and down (pitch) movement.

Maybe this wasn’t a good choice. I thought maybe I should go back, but I didn’t want go through kind of turbulence again. When it did smooth out, my altitude was 10,500 feet msl. This was a little extra altitude loss, but considering what I had gone through was OK. Sierraville is about seven more miles. I have 5,500 feet agl of altitude to use.

Suddenly Doug in TAZ said on the radio, “I have to land!” Dean in DD responded, “Be sure to lower your landing gear.” A minute later Doug says “I am on the ground and think I am OK. I thought, “Boy, that was fast!”

The ground is coming up fast, so fast that I could not turn onto the final leg. I had to land from the base leg. As the ground continued to come up, I thought, “Man, this could be bad.”

Doug was over the ridge, east of Sierraville and heading to Loyalton to get away from the storm. He hit major sink and just made it back and over power lines into a cut alfalfa field with just enough room to spare.

While listening to Doug, I noticed that my variometer was buried on the down side. My altimeter was dropping below 9500 feet msl, and it started to unwind pretty fast. It looked like I could do a “straight in” to Sierraville airport, but I stopped short, even though it was right off my nose, about 3 miles south. I did not know what was between my location and the airport. Suddenly I am down to 6,500 feet msl (1,500 feet agl).

Decision time

I had to make a decision now. I got on the radio and said “I have to land!” At the same time I had about 10 seconds to pick out a field to the

east. There were cows in one field and a lot of fences in the other. Next was a pasture that looked, flat, smooth and large. I couldn’t believe how fast I just lost 3,500 feet of altitude and my variometer is still buried.

When I turned on downwind leg, there was a major drop in my airspeed, approximately 65 knots down to 45 knots in the matter of a few seconds. It felt like the bottom just fell out. Just like auto-pilot the stick went forward to pick up the airspeed. This will get your attention. I had to clear power lines, a fence and keep the nose down to keep the airspeed up or risk a stall/spin.

The turn on to base leg was OK, but my airspeed was still way too slow. The ground is coming up fast, so fast that I could not turn onto the final leg. I had to land from the base leg. As the ground continued to come up, I thought, “Man, this could be bad.” I was coming down like a rock, my air speed was still about 45 knots, and the ground speed looked really fast.

At the last few feet I could finally feel a little cushion of air just before I touched down. My vision was starting to become a little like being in a tunnel right at touchdown. This pasture was a little rough, and I rolled and bumped to a stop just before a little ditch. “Whew! That was close! Too close!”

Time to think

I called on the radio to say “I’m on the ground and OK.” I sat there for some time to think about what just happened and what did I do right and wrong. I wasn’t ready to get out yet to check to see if my glider was still in one piece. I called Soar Truckee on my cell phone and gave them my position and was told that TAZ was also down about 1.5 miles south. I also called my wife, who was concerned because of the storm in Truckee.

What did I do right? I was able to get down in one piece. Thank goodness for good habits. I had responded correctly. I had little time to think about what I was doing. I was highly focused. I was very, very busy flying and I think having reasonably good

landing habits took over. I hope this will always be the case.

I did wonder why I had out the spoilers as I was getting close to touchdown. This must have been a habit. I don't think I needed the spoilers except to stop.

The field I picked was large enough that it was OK to land on base leg, I was very lucky that it was a good field. It is a crapshoot to land in a strange field, even if you have a couple hours to study it from the air.

Reflecting on decisions made

What I did do wrong? I think my poor judgment and decision-making created this event. Carl Herold once said "Don't fool around with mature T-Storms: They will bite you!" When I was at Nervino, a decision to go east towards Loyalton would have at least given more options. It would have allowed more distance away from the storm and time to find more lift or a field to land at my leisure. There are lots of flat fields in that area, if I had needed one.

The decision to head and possibly land where DD and TAZ were heading clouded my thinking, I hate to land by myself. Plus they are both accomplished pilots and they probably know something that I didn't.

Not paying some attention to landable fields on the way to Sierraville, even when I had plenty of altitude was a big oversight. The amount of sink around a T-storm caught me off guard. I knew better.

Other pilots landed out

5H made it to Truckee with a lot of good decision-making, hard work and patience. DL almost made it to Truckee but had to pick out a field north of Boca Lake. The landing was good for a short field and about 7 miles short of Truckee.

Bill knew where he was but his crew was not sure how to get there. The sun was going down when his crew found a girl on horseback. She saw the DL glider and was able to give directions on his location. This experience now reinforced the reasons for his survival kit. Bill is also much wiser for the wear and tear.

DD made it to Donner Summit, but the T-storm blocked his way to Truckee. Dean & Steve had to go back and land at Sierraville. They escaped the microburst, with a good understanding of T-storms and some luck.

While putting my glider in the trailer, we could see Cumulonimbus Mammatus in just about all directions. I am thankful for this day and all that I have learned. We are thankful that my Silverado Soaring buddies all made it down OK. I don't want to do this again.

This storm made the headlines in most of the Sierra foothill towns. There were few forest fires along the Sierra in 1999, but the Aug. 22 storm started some fires that lasted for a couple months.

Nevin Nyswonger is a technical representative of automotive test equipment for Snap-On Tools in Truckee, Calif. He has also been an instructor at Sierra College teaching automotive drivability. He flies at Truckee-Tahoe Airport and belongs to Tahoe Truckee Airmen, Silverado Soaring, PASCO and Valley Soaring Assoc.

Photos and Articles Wanted!

Contribute to WestWind in 2000.

Photos and articles are very much appreciated. Send them along to

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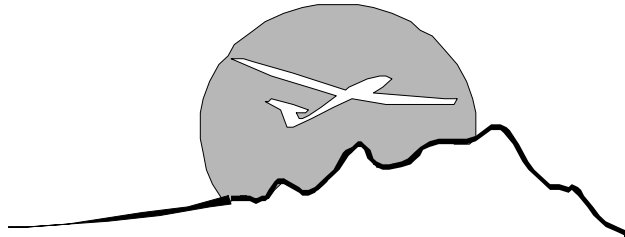
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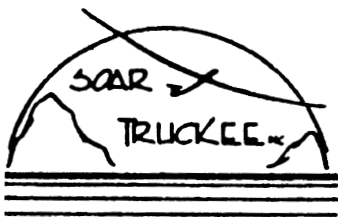
Use of Mode C Transponders

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.



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Calendar of Events

April 15,16: Air Sailing Spring Cleaning Work Party, Air Sailing Gliderport, NV. Contact Dale Thompson, dale@crl.com, 4443 Fieldcrest Dr. Richmond, Ca. 94803-2001, 510-223-4259.

April 17,18: Glider Flight Instructor Recertification Clinic, Hollister, CA. Conducted by The Soaring Safety Foundation with the Hollister Gliding Club. Instructors, those who want to be instructors, and non-instructors are all invited to attend. For more information, please contact Bob Wander: email is Soarbooks@aol.com, (612) 920-1804 voice; (612) 920-5651 fax. To make a reservation, please contact Cyndi Stephenson at SSA (505) 392-1177.

April 22-29: 2nd Annual Western Seniors Contest, April 22-29, Estrella Sailport, Phoenix, AZ. Sponsored by ArizonaSoaring, Inc. Contact Bruce Stephens (520) 568-2318, bruce@azsoaring.com

April 29: The Arvin Remembrance and National Landmark of Soaring Dedication, Arvin, CA. The Arvin Remembrance is a series of events to commemorate the Arvin-Sierra Gliderport. Many activities are planned, both at the Arvin site and at Mountain Valley Gliderport, Tehachapi, CA. For more information see <http://tehachapi.com/arvingliderport> or contact Janice Armstrong at (661) 822-8852 or e-mail danarmstro@aol.com.

May 1: PASCO Board Meeting, 7:30 pm, Old Terminal Building, Buchanan Field, Concord. All members invited.

May 6,7: PASCO League Meet #1, Williams Soaring Center, Williams, CA. Contact Tony Gaechter, (408) 867-2182 h, Tony-gaechter@worldnet.att.net

May 17-21: Central California Soaring Club Spring Contest, Avenal, CA. Practice Day May 17. Contact Dan Gudgel, 134 South Olive Street, Lemoore, CA 93245-3412, (559) 924-7134 home, dgudgel@cnetech.com, or Mario Crosina, 1747 Bobolink Lane, Fresno, CA 93727, (559) 251-7933, mcrosina@pacbell.net.

June 3,4: PASCO League Meet #2, Avenal Gliderport, Avenal, CA. Contact Tony Gaechter, (408) 867-2182 h, Tony-gaechter@worldnet.att.net

June 19-23: Region 11 North Contest, Siskiyou County Airport, Montague. 18th is practice. Contact: Manager Nancy Kemp P.O. box 405 Willows, Ca 95988, 530-934-2482 or register online with SSA. e-mail is gkemp@diamond.sunset.net.

June 19-23: 2000 Air Sailing Thermaling Camp, Air Sailing, NV. Contact Rolf Peterson, 2618 Tahoe Dr., Livermore, CA 94550, rolfpete@aol.com, (925) 447-4255 h, (925) 447-5620 w.

June 26 - July 1: Y2K Air Sailing Sports Class Contest, Air Sailing Gliderport, NV. Practice Day June 25. SSA-Sanctioned Regional Contest. Contact Ty White, Contest Director, 41600 Marigold Dr., Fremont, CA 94539. (408) 616-8378 w, (510) 490-6765 h, tywhite@a.crl.com.

July 3-7: NSA Safari from AirSailing, NV. Contact Vern Frye for information at (775) 825-1125.

July 10-14: The 22nd annual Women's Soaring Seminar, Air Sailing Gliderport NV. Pilots of all abilities are invited to join us for a week of seminars, badge and record pursuit and lots of flying. C Pam Sutton at 820 California Ave. Reno, NV 89509, (775) 684-5847 or pvsutton@doit.state.nv.us.

July 15-27: Parowan 2000 Badge, Record, and Distance Gathering, Parowan, UT. Contact Rolf Peterson, 2618 Tahoe Dr., Livermore, CA 94550, rolfpete@aol.com, (925) 447-5620 h or (925) 447-4255 w.

July 17-21: 2000 Air Sailing Cross-Country Camp, Air Sailing, NV. Contact David Volkmann, PO Box 64, Shasta, CA 96087, (530) 246-7559 or e-mail volkmann@snowcrest.net

July 17-21: Region 11 South Contest, Tonopah, NV. Contact Rick Walters, 1121 Oro Way, Gardnerville, NV 89410, (775) 720-4779 (days), (775) 265-3386 (eves). On line registration Accepted through SSA. \$100 deposit. Must be registered 2 weeks prior to contest.

July 22, 23: PASCO League Meet #3, Truckee Airport, Truckee, CA. Contact Tony Gaechter, (408) 867-2182 h, Tony-gaechter@worldnet.att.net

July 24-28: Second Annual Air Sailing Badge and Record Camp, Air Sailing, NV. For soaring pilots desiring to begin or continue the achievement of their Silver, Gold and Diamond badges as well as those pilots seeking to pursue Nevada and California state records, especially in the sports class category. Pilots attending should have x/c experience in high desert conditions. Services provided include wx briefings, x/c planning, and SSA qualified badge observers. Dual x/c and record flying instruction available prior to and during the camp. For information contact Charlie Hayes, 9732 Pyramid Lake Highway, PMB 356, Sparks, NV. 89436. Email badgcamp@soar-palomino.com. (775) 475-2440

August 5,6: PASCO League Meet #4, Air Sailing Gliderport, Palomino Valley, NV. Contact Tony Gaechter, (408) 867-2182 h, Tony-gaechter@worldnet.att.net

August 12,13: The Third Annual Gerlach Dash, Air Sailing Gliderport to Gerlach, NV. Sponsored by NSA. Contact Vern Frye for information at (775) 825-1125. Motel reservations at Bruno's in Gerlach (775) 557-2220.



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