

The West Wind

July/August 2010



Preflight

It's a beautiful day for flying - so why am I composing a magazine? To remind YOU to go flying, of course! Although some of the region's soaring operations had reported slow starts, right now wonderful soaring can be found everywhere.

To the mountains! In this issue we head up the hill and drop in on Soar Truckee and SoaringNV. Get a load of some fantastic glider crafts by George Popa. Ramy Yanetz (from the VSA newsletter) hits the "SPOT". Meanwhile, there are some big changes coming to soaring operations at Hollister.

There's another big change that's not so obvious: with this issue, our advertisers are starting to carry some of the costs of producing The West Wind magazine. If you are having as much fun reading as I am editing, then please support them. Goodness knows the economy needs it!

Remember to visit us on the web at pacificsoaring.org for in-depth information regarding PASCO operations, schedules of soaring events throughout the region and helpful information about soaring everywhere.

- Jim Wallis, Editor (comm@pacificsoaring.org)

Cover: On the line at Minden in a Duo Discus

Heard Around the Airport

If you work for the FAA, SoaringNV is providing glider orientation/familiarization flights at no charge. Sounds like a pretty good deal. Give them a call at 877-276-2768 for more information.

Possible regulatory action by the State of California could have a deleterious effect upon flight instruction. AOPA and NATA are lobbying diligently. Additional information to be posted on the PASCO web page.

HELP WANTED

PASCO is looking for someone to serve as liaison between PASCO and the FAA on matters of airspace, proposed rule changes, and general communication, including with NORCAL. This is a volunteer position, but it is important for our representation of the interests of glider pilots in northern Nevada and California. A general knowledge of regulations would be helpful. Contact Bruce Roberts at 408-219-6313 to throw your hat in the ring - as soon as possible!

Mountain High



*"Going to the mountains is going home."
- John Muir*

On a delightfully sunny Sunday last month I finally cleared my calendar, jumped into the car and headed for the hills for badly overdue visits to Truckee and Minden. Driving up highway 80 into the Sierra - especially if it has been a while - is a sublime experience. By the time I made Auburn I was almost euphoric. The rocks, the trees, the clear air...

I did make a couple of wrong turns getting to Soar Truckee, located on the East side of the Truckee airport, but hey, it really HAD been a long time! If anything, the area has only become more beautiful. Soar Truckee is located in a park-like setting with tall pine trees, picnic benches and quiet all around. Soar Truckee is truly pilot and family friendly with a 27 acre campground (tent or RV), lawn, bar-b-ques every Saturday, showers and plenty of shade. And that is before you even start talking about some of the best scenery in the world with a list of recreational possi-

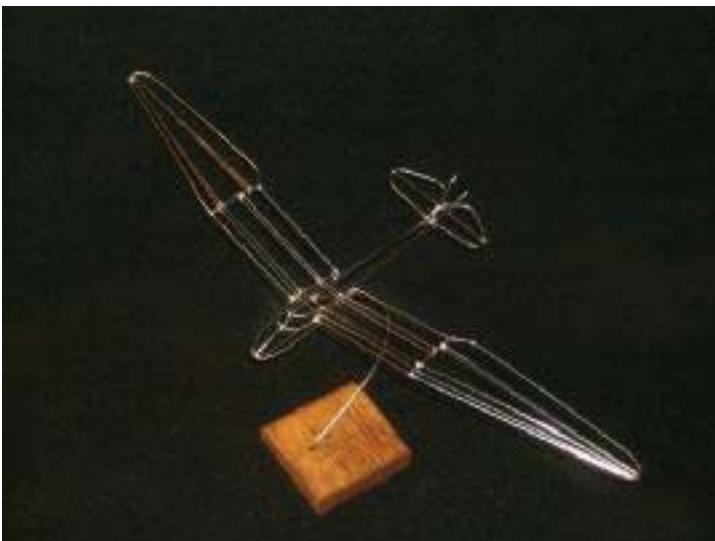
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George Popa, Craftsman

Modeling sailplanes out of wire began from necessity. My mentor, Richard Starrett had everything. There were no store-bought gifts existing that somebody had not already bought him. Since I was teaching him how to fly model sailplanes, I made him a wire sculpture sailplane (my first ever) which he really liked.

Richard told me to make up several pieces and take them to Don Conard Mobiles in Ghirardelli Square. Don liked my crude beginnings and promptly put them out on the shelves. The first piece to leave the shop was stolen! I was ecstatic...somebody liked the little biplane enough to steal it. There was a niche in the gallery's product lineup for scale models of boats, planes and cars which I filled for fourteen years. I have never considered myself to be an artist as were the other contributors to the gallery. The word



“craftsman” seemed a better fit.

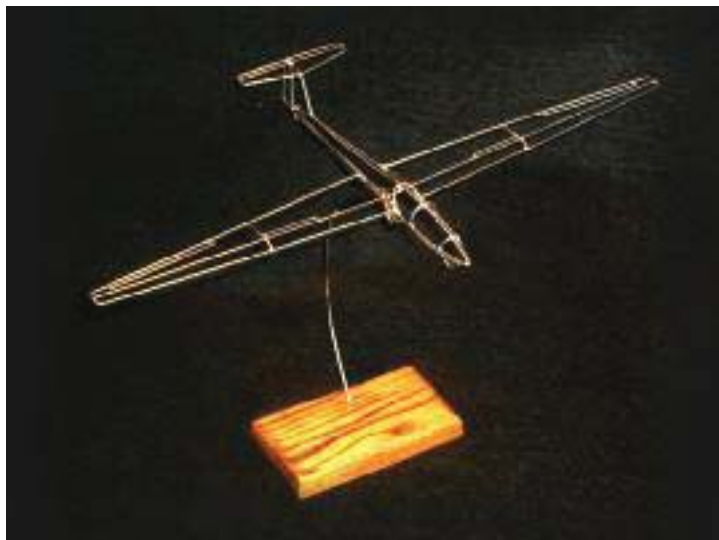
Major clients have been the New York Yacht Club, Ted Turner, Michel Bich and the San Diego Maritime Museum plus many tens of custom pieces commissioned as gifts for special occasions such as trophies for the League of Silent Flight and the Corinthian Yacht Club of Tiburon, CA.

All pieces are stainless steel wire soldered with an ordinary 50 watt iron using silver bearing solder and liquid flux.

While I also enjoy modeling whales and other aquatic creatures, my work has been appreciated for its accuracy to a plan, in the case of aircraft, cars and boats.

I am thankful to WSPA President Neita Montague and Frauke Elber for their warm friendship and for showing the sculptures for our mutual benefit. A portion of the sales goes towards the WSPA scholarship fund.

Website: georgepoppasculptures.com



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Go, Spot, Go

By Ramy Yanetz

Spot is a Satellite GPS messenger which works virtually anywhere. For glider pilots, it is the ultimate, multipurpose, low cost device which has multiple distinct uses:

1 – It can be used as a personal locator beacon to call for emergency assistance from anywhere with a press of a button. No cell phone coverage is needed. Emergency services agencies receive a rapid notification with GPS coordinates. This can be a life saver in case of a bad landout or crash, which may happen where no cell phone service is available.

2 – By automatically sending your track point every 10 minutes, it can serve as an emergency locator if a pilot is missing. It will either pinpoint the location of the crash or will show the last known location prior to the crash, significantly reducing the search area. This should eliminate the days or months of risky and costly searches we have seen or heard of many times before.

3 – In case of a landout, Spot can be used to send either an "OK" message to your crew, or a help message to indicate you need a retrieve. Since it sends messages by both text and email, which includes exact coordinates and a Google map link, locating the glider becomes an easy task. No more looking all over for a glider.

4 – During cross country flights it can be used to send agreed upon messages to your crew to update them on your status and alternate plans. Crew no longer need to guess where their pilot may go.

5 – Perhaps the most common use, by pressing the tracking button before each flight, one can broadcast their location to friends and family via a web interface. The device will provide position report automatically every 10 minutes, which will show up on a Google map in near real time. For social networking fans, this is like an automatic tweeting! This has be-

come a popular venue for friends and fans to follow flights and contests, and for spouses to check on their pilot status.

In addition to these multiple uses in gliders, since Spot is a portable device it can also be used elsewhere, such as in your car, while hiking etc. It can even be used as a security device to protect an asset. Worried that someone may steal your car or trailer? Leave the spot on with a good view of the sky and you'll be able to locate it if stolen - although it will stop transmitting after 24 hours.

You would think that such an amazing multipurpose device should cost a fortune like most things aviation related. Not so. Since it was not designed for aviation, it can be bought in many sport outlets, online sites such as Amazon, and of course soaring catalogs for a mere \$150, often much less or even free with rebates! The only other cost is the yearly \$150 service fee, still a great bargain!



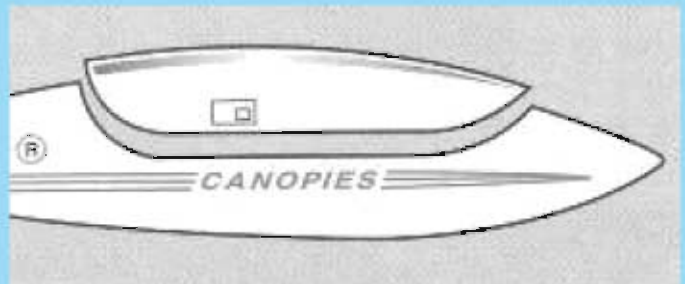
No installation is necessary, but don't put it in the side pocket! It needs a clear view of the sky. The best approach

is to Velcro it somewhere on the canopy where it has clear view, or strap it to your parachute below the shoulder straps, making sure it will not interfere with deployment (see photo). The latter might be your best option in case of a bailout if you don't carry a personal locator beacon.

Operating the unit is very simple, just press the on/off button and the tracking/OK button. In case of emergency press the 911 button. Switching between tracking mode and sending OK messages can be cumbersome due to a use of a single button for both functions. This was vastly improved in the new smaller Spot 2 which has separate buttons for each function,

See Spot Go - Page 6

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the East of the airport called "Pine Nuts". The thermals certainly lived up to their billing: Even though we had released at about 7200' agl (field elevation is 4722) it seemed like no time had passed before we were bumping our heads on 14,000. Perhaps it was the lack of oxygen (my regulator was acting oddly) but Jeff has a zen style of instructing that cracks me up. As is the case in Truckee, long flights from Minden are the norm and, of course, Minden is world famous for wave conditions which foster high altitude flights as well as long distances.

After a three hour drive home it was an exhausting day, but I can't wait to do it again!

Check out Soar Truckee at www.soartruckee.com (530-587-6702) and SoaringNV at www.soaringnv.com (877-276-2768). Soar Minden is also on the field (www.soarminden.com, 800-345-7627).

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bilities as long as your arm. Oh, and you can go flying, too!

Cold night air and warm summer days combine for very good thermal conditions. Pilots frequently fly significant distances to the North or South and flights to the Carson-Minden Valley are easily made. Instruction is available from primary through advanced with good opportunities available for development of mountain flying skills. With three clubs operating on site you would think that the operation would be a little chaotic, but I found the flight line operation to be impressively organized. I can't wait to get back up there for some flying!

At SoaringNV in Minden I had the foresight to have scheduled some time in one of their Duo Discus' so, as soon as I worked through the paperwork, I strapped myself in along with instructor Jeff Hazlegrove for some air work and an area orientation. We shot a couple of landings and then worked a few thermals on the way over to their local ridge about ten miles to



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Spot - From Page 4

so it is possible to easily send OK messages as well as custom messages while you are in tracking mode. The Spot2 also apparently has more transmission power, and send multiple tracking points each time - significantly reducing dropped trackpoints.

Battery life is excellent in the original Spot, over 300 hours, so most pilots will not need to replace batteries for a few years. Spot 2 has a shorter battery life of about 150 hours.

To be able to share your location on Google map, it is necessary to create a shared page on the Spot web site, which is rather simple to do. It is possible to set the page to display the trackpoints from 24 hours to 7 days. However keep in mind that the longer the period the more flights will show in a single track. One solution is to go to the Spot web site and delete/hide the trackpoints after every flight. Also it is recommended to set the shared page to display OK/Help messages as well, and press the OK button every time you land. Leave the Spot on for another 10 minutes at least, to make sure that your last message will show you back at the airport and not somewhere along your final glide.

Creating a shared page by itself is not sufficient. You will next want to publish it. Many clubs and FBO's maintain a list of spot shared pages of local pilots, and the SSA has a nationwide sailplane tracker page, so make sure to submit your shared page url to SSA.

Other than the Spot provided Shared Page, which uses Google maps, additional user interfaces are available, such as iPhone and Blackberry apps, as well as tracking services which are capable of displaying multiple tracks in one page - especially useful for contest tracking.

A couple of issues to be aware of with Spot:

1 – Occasionally spot can not get a message through, which results in missing trackpoints. On average there are 10%-20% missing trackpoints. The implication is that there could be as much as a 30 minutes gap between trackpoints.

2 – Additional delays occur in the web site back end until a track point is shown online. The delays can be anywhere from few minutes to an hour or more, so the track is not always real time, and a long period with no new trackpoints is not necessarily alarming.

For more information check findmespot.com



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The Evolution of Soaring at Hollister

*By: Quest Richlife, Member and Manager
Hollister Soaring Center*

Beginning on July 1st, there will be some significant positive changes happening on the Hollister soaring scene. A new soaring enterprise has been formed and will gradually replace Hollister Gliding Club as the glider fixed-base operator at Hollister Municipal airport. The name of the new operation is: **Hollister Soaring Center LLC (HSC)**. Over the next several months HSC will take on all of the business activities formerly conducted by the Hollister Gliding Club (HGC). Additionally, Hollister Soaring Center (HSC) will offer as one of its business activities scenic and aerobatic glider rides through the acquisition of a current Hollister business dba Bay Area Glider Rides. This division of HSC will continue to operate and be known as Bay Area Glider Rides (BAGR). BAGR is a well-known brand name of aviation recreation that has enjoyed a long tenure of success in the greater Bay Area.

There are several reasons for the changeover from Hollister Gliding Club to Hollister Soaring Center:

> The changeover will include conversion from a sole proprietorship to a limited liability company (LLC) form of business. This is intended to control liability concerns as well as to ensure the preservation of all aspects of gliders and soaring in Hollister for many years to come. Instead of relying on just one business owner for glider and soaring services, the new business seeks to bring together the entire soaring community to help preserve glider activities at Hollister for generations to come.

> In order for a soaring operation to continue to be financially viable in fluctuating economic climates, it is imperative that the operation offer not only aero-towing services and flight instruction but also scenic rides. HGC did not offer scenic rides, but HSC will offer scenic rides through a fully owned division dba Bay Area Glider Rides. The addition of the scenic rides will provide the additional income to allow the entire glider and soaring operation to continue indefi-

nately without interruption.

> Once upon a time, long, long ago, Hollister Gliding Club was, in fact, a business based on the concept of a Club which pilots joined in order to have access to a variety of gliders that could be rented, etc. That has not been the case for many years now, and certainly not for the last 4 1/2 years in which I've been the owner and proprietor. The name "Club" is just not appropriate for what I have been doing for many years now, and it's time that this name be retired from the soaring scene at Hollister. It is also very confusing for those folks simply asking questions and obtaining information about learning to fly at Hollister. Unlike Bay Area Soaring Associates (BASA), which is truly a private "Club" on the field at Hollister, there has never been any sort of "Club" to join at HGC (while under my ownership) in order for a person to receive tows or flight instruction. It is a misnomer that may now be put to rest.

These are the main reasons for the switch to Hollister Soaring Center LLC. Currently, I am the sole Member and Manager, however, I am not going to be around forever, and having the LLC in place makes it possible for new Members to come in, and Members to leave over time. Similarly, there is now a framework in place whereby a new Manager, or

Managers, can be brought into the organization, and others can move on without being financially, legally and contractually beholden to the glider operation indefinitely. Hopefully, with support and energy from the northern California soaring community, Hollister Soaring Center LLC can provide tows, instruction and scenic rides in the greater Bay Area for the next 10, 20, or 30 years, or longer.

Like any form of evolution, these changes won't happen overnight, so please give me a few months to get all the financial and operational changes in place and functioning smoothly. There are literally hundreds of changes that need to be made all the way from the accounting and tax infrastructure, down to the smallest logo changes on our products and advertisements. But the ball is now rolling and I'm confident that it'll pick up speed as time goes by. We're sure to see a positive result for glider flying and soaring out of Hollister as we look toward the years ahead.



The West Wind
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Davis, California 95616

The West Wind magazine is interested in articles and/or photographs that are of general interest and related to almost anything to do with soaring. Please submit material to the editor via electronic mail at:
Comm@PacificSoaring.org.

The West Wind magazine is a publication of the Pacific Soaring Council, Inc. (PASCO) a California non-profit §501(c)(3) corporation engaged in furthering the growth and development of the regional (Nevada, Northern California, Hawaii) soaring movement through educational activities and the fostering of amateur sports competition. This material is copyrighted 2010 by PASCO. All rights are reserved.

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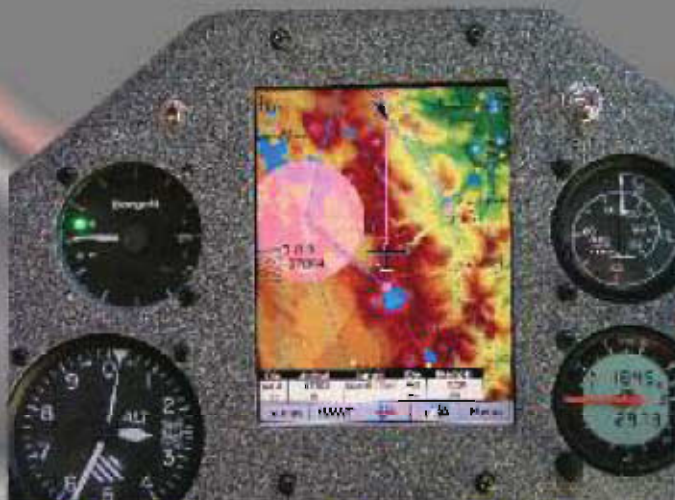
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