Air Sailing News

Editor: Eric Norris ASI web site: http://www.airsailing.org/ **September 2005**

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Blackhawk Gets High, Part Deux

By Lee Edling

Gold Altitude (3,000 meter altitude gain) for Blackhawk (Lee)—Well we'll see what the SSA Badge Lady says. Last year she said the GPS data logger file was corrupted after a heroic (you had to be there) flight to nearly 18,000 feet. This year there was nicer weather for this gold altitude attempt and the bases must have been a little under 18,000. The white glider (a 1-36) you see belongs to NSA (Nevada Soaring Association) and is based at Air Sailing, north of Reno, NV.

The previous day, an NSA member had landed it at Truckee, so Chukar (Bob Spielman) flew me to Truckee in his 182 for the retrieve. There were many Bay area pilots there to say hello to and Jan showed me the new high speed paved exit for the gliders off runway 19. After some visiting it was time to launch to the hot rocks, a location east of the Truckee airport.

Tow was by their green Pawnee, sometimes called "Pickle." Release was at 8,000 feet and soon I was at 14,500 over Mt. Rose. I had a declared distance task on the computer from the Truckee airport but the scruffy clouds and blue sky to the west dictated that I'd be better off going directly to Air Sailing and there were many healthy clouds north, south, and east. The glider radio traffic on 123.3 basically stated that there was lift everywhere, so it didn't matter which way you went—as long as it wasn't west.

It didn't take long to reach Air Sailing, only a 30 nautical mile flight from Mt. Rose, and on the trip I'd worked on Plan B.

Plan B. "That's what I'll do," I thought. I lost more altitude at Air Sailing until I got down to about 6,000 feet and patrolled around the airport, looking for lift. There were a couple of interesting places and one was above the north end of 17. I worked my way down to 5,400 and tried to get back up. After a couple of turns it was undecided; then the audio vario began to chirp happily as it announced altitude gains. Lift in one spot would top out and then a move to another location would allow the climb to continue. At 9,500 I flew over the middle of the Dogskins and hit ten knot lift.

Passing through 10,000 I reminded myself that I only had another mile to climb. Way up there was the glider-lifting cloud of my dreams and I eventually flew under it, searching for air the cloud was sucking in from below. Contact! The air vent had to be closed because it was getting too cold. The altimeter moved closer to 15,300 and then climbed past it.

Yes! Take that, Badge Lady! War cries shook the glider as I celebrated. Corrupted files my tail feathers!

Just to add a cushion for instrument error, the

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

Tired of his Vega, John Boyce puts his sunglasses in position on the Black Rock Desert (Gerlach Dash) to start a fire in the wheel well.

(Blackhawk, cont.) climb was continued to 16,400 feet. What a view!

After landing, I pondered whether the hex a certain lady CFIG had placed on the Volkslogger had been manifested. What If I have to do a gold altitude gain again next year?

Okay, what comes after part deux? I know—Threepeat (coined after the 49ers had won two consecutive Super Bowls). If the SSA Badge Lady shuns me again, stay tuned for Blackhawk Gets High, Threepeat!

Message from the President

By Ty White

With Labor Day upon us, the "official" summer season at Air Sailing has nearly ended. We had a jam-packed summer of events at the gliderport: Thermaling Camp, Sports Class Regionals, Women's Soaring Seminar, Badge Camp, Cross-Country Camp, XC Instructor Course and the Gerlach Dash. The NSA also took off to explore the soaring at Bishop in a week-long encampment. The tow pilots were worked hard, as were the many volunteers who did double duty to cover the main events. Particular thanks go out to the event organizers: Rolf Peterson, David Cunningham, Jim Hamilton, David Prather, Cindy Donovan, Terry Duncan and Pam Sutton; and the cadre of active tow pilots: Colin Aro, Lee Edling, Roger Harris and Bob Spielman.

Lee Edling does triple or quadruple duty at Air Sailing, serving as tow pilot, instructor, watchman and main facility maintenance guy. Lee's work on summer days seems to be endless, and those who have encountered Lee dragging the entrance road after dark know what I mean.

As part of the tasks we must complete to allow use of RVs and travel-trailers on the gliderport, we were required to delineate the RV camping area with a barrier fence. After some on-line discussion and debate, a clever, relatively inexpensive post and rope barrier was quickly designed and installed by unsung volunteers working in the hottest part of the summer. Thanks to Pam Sutton and Steve Smith for design work, and David Volkmann, Lee Edling, John Boyce, Dick Horn, Diane Horn and Doug Grey for the actual hole digging, post placement and rope stringing.

We had a very successful summer of events, with many great flights and a new crop of visitors who enjoyed Air Sailing and who will return in future years. The summer success was marred by the tragic fatal accident of Maria Faber, a Women's Soaring Seminar participant who stayed on for Badge Camp. This accident occurred at Air Sailing, but frankly, it could have happened at any of the gliderports we fly at. Even so, we all need to think hard about how to better prevent these avoidable deaths and injuries, starting in our own backyard.

On a less somber note, the Awards Banquet and return of the Silent Auction will take place at the Peppermill on October 1st. You should all be receiving contact information, and I really hope to see a lot of you there.

Otherwise, see you at the gliderport!

2005 Air Sailing Sports Class Regionals

By Ty White

The 2005 Air Sailing Sports Class Regionals hosted a field of 12 gliders this year, including a PW-5, a Dart 15, the usual collection of 15-meter and standard class glass ships and a Duo Discus. We had a good mix of Air Sailing veterans and pilots completely new to the site,

David Prather at the 2005 Sports Class Contest

including two teams from the Air Force Academy flying L-33 Solos. The Air Force Academy group was very fun to have at the contest for many reasons, not the least of which was that it reduced the average pilot age considerably. In contrast to those pilots who often fly sports class without dedicated crew, the Academy team was quite an operation, with 2 pilots per glider, plenty of ground crew, a command trailer (callsign: Overlord), and civilian contractors to maintain the aircraft! In the Air Sailing tradition, 2004 winner Jimmy Hamilton served as Competition Director. Jimmy is a four-time winner of the Air Sailing Contest, and he ran a tight ship, but also ensured that this contest helped train pilots new to competition in a cooperative learning environment. There was a heavy emphasis on safety, with daily safety briefings an integral part of each pilots' meeting.

Day 1 – July 4

The contest got off to a good start on July 4th with soaring weather better than expected, including cloud markers not seen on Practice Day. Even though it could be a long glide between good thermals, the lift was consistent to 15,000–16,000 with some pilots reporting 17,000 and above. Based on the pessimistic forecast and the Practice Day experience, the CD called a 2.5 hour Modified Assigned Task (MAT), with the first turn to be selected from Silver Springs, Tiger Field or Flanigan. No turnpoint could be used more than once.

Roughly half the field went south first, chasing cu and wisps forming in that quadrant. The top three pilots for the day went north to Flanigan first, apparently making that the correct strategic decision. Winner for the day was 2003 Air Sailing winner Jim Gager (BY) in his PW-5. Jim flew to Flanigan, south to Tiger Field, back north to Constantia, then to Air Sailing, Wofford and home for 195.56 handicapped miles at 73.33 handicapped mph. Jim's raw speed was 60.8 mph. Close behind was Russell Holtz (DP) flying a Vega the longest raw distance—220.54 miles at 70.69 handicapped mph. Russell flew Flanigan, Flying Mouse, Rabbit Dry Lake, Tracy Power Plant, Air Sailing, Wofford and home. Third place Tim Taylor (W) flew his Ventus B the fastest raw speed at 77.35 mph. Tim and half the field flew south down the Pinenuts to Flying Mouse, with several pilots reporting 17,000 plus jumping off Mount Siegel.

Day 2 – July 5

Day 2 was a truly bodacious soaring day, with cloudbases to 17,000 ft plus in the contest area and climbs in excess of 10 kts in certain sweet spots. CD Jimmy Hamilton set a clever Turn Area Task (TAT) that allowed for all contestants to take full advantage of the varying performances of their ships. The top 3 finishers were flying a Ventus, a Dart 15 and an L-33 Solo: surely an ideal result for a sports class contest. The task was a 3 hour TAT with turns as follows: Tiger Field with a 5 mile radius, Dayton Valley at 10 miles, Sweetwater Strip at 20 miles and Silver Springs at 5 miles. Starting was a bit of a struggle, but once beyond Pond Peak at the south end of the Air Sailing Valley, the soaring was excellent. Wisps and cu formed on the range running north of US 50 to Virginia City, and a street developed early on the Pinenuts. After turning Tiger field, pilots could elect to continue straight to the Pinenuts and then run up to Dayton, or run toward Virginia City and jump to the Pinenuts right over the Dayton Turnpoint. The run down the Pinenuts was under a street, and from Mt. Siegel, the lower performance ships didn't need to run far to hit the 20 mile circle around Sweetwater. The higher performance ships

Matt Herron at the 2005 Sports Class Contest

could jump to the cu on Desert Creek Peak and run well past Sweetwater towards Bridgeport. Some pilots were able to cruise back north from Mt. Patterson to the north end of the Pinenuts without circling.

Winner for Day 2, placing him in first place overall, was Tim Taylor (W). Tim flew his Ventus 250.01 raw miles at an actual speed of 83.36 mph, handicapped to 74.34. Second was Charlie Hoke (9E), flying the Dart 173.38 raw miles at a handicapped speed of 71.32 mph. The third place went to Rob Schomaker from one of the two Air Force Academy teams (AF5), flying an L-33 solo 197.51 raw miles at 54.4 mph actual, handicapped to 248.86 miles at 68.54 mph. Rob's flight turned out to be the longest handicapped task of the contest. The longest actual flight of the day was by Matt Herron (1JW), who flew his LS4 257.55 miles. Day 1 first place finisher Russell Holtz (DP) missed the last turnpoint circle, costing him heavily by dropping him to last place.

At the end of Day 2, Tim Taylor (W) was in first place with 1941 points, followed closely by Jim Gager (BY) with 1908 points.

July 6 was called as a rest day in anticipation of even better soaring weather later in the week.

Day 3 – July 7

Well now, Day 3 was certainly a different kettle of fish. Coming off a rest day in which the soaring was as fabulous as on Day 2, we expected the soaring weather to be similar, if a bit dryer. CD Jimmy Hamilton called a 3 hour TAT with turns as follows: Tracy Power Plant, 1 mile radius, Flying Mouse, 20 miles, Silver Springs, 10 miles, Flanigan, 15 miles and Nervino-Beckworth, 15 miles. At launch, cu were forming over Air Sailing and to the north and were also reported to the south, so we stayed with the primary task. As pilots headed south toward Tracy Power Plant, it quickly became apparent that the day was not going to be easy. The Pinenuts were completely blue and the only cu to the south were WAY south, clearly of no use to us on this particular task. The early starters were crossing Tracy Power at lower than 10,000 feet and driving into the high ground south of I-80 to find lift to get them to the Pinenuts. Some of the early starters, such as Ty White (TY) and Rolf Peterson (PE), were among the early landouts, both safe at dry lakes. Others, like Charlie Hoke (9E) and Tim Taylor (W), worked their way across the Dayton Valley and low into the Pinenuts. So this is how the day started out, and it didn't get any better.

In the end, only Russell Holtz (DP) was able to work his Vega around the entire course. Russ flew 184 actual miles at a raw speed of 48.13 mph, handicapped to 46.69. Russ spent much of the course ridge-soaring (the Pinenuts, the Virginias, Tule Peak, Peterson Ridge). He said it was the most challenging task of his life. Russ received 467 points for this severely devalued day. Second for the day was Jim Gager (BY), who flew his PW-5 to 3 of the turnpoints for a total distance of 129.97 miles. Third was Tim Taylor (W), who was still flying his Ventus in the Air Sailing area after 7 pm, trying to get to the final turn. Only 6 contestants actually made the second turnpoint. All the landouts were at airports or safe dry lakes and we had no damage or weird retrieves.

At the end of Day 3, first place was held by Tim Taylor (W) with 2216 points, followed closely by Jim Gager (BY) with 2190 points.

Day 4 – July 8

Weather for July 8 was forecast to be very similar to Day 3, which was very challenging, to say the least. In light of this, the CD called a 2 hour MAT with a first required turn at Tracy Power Plant. Pilots expected to stay close in and not venture too far downwind. We were finding lift to 13,000 or so at the launch, and the Virginias were working toward Tracy Power Plant. First for the day was Russell Holtz (DP), who flew his Vega to Tracy Power, Wofford, Air Sailing, and then committed to a landout on Flanigan Dry Lake to snag the Flanigan turnpoint, but was able to climb out

Mono Lake from the BASA DG-1000

and run back to Tracy Power Plant. Russ flew 138.00 actual miles for a raw speed of 63.04 mph, handicapped to 61.15. Tim Taylor (W) flew almost the identical course at a raw speed of 60.37 mph for second place. Ten competitors completed tasks in the same local area, and there were two landouts. Unfortunately Rob Shomaker sustained minor damage to the Air Force Academy L-33 AF5 in a pasture landout near Constantia, so that ship was out of the running for a possible Day 5. At the end of Day 4, Tim Taylor (W) led with 3096 points, followed closely by Jim Gager (BY) with 3068. Russell Holtz (DP) was now in third, with 2770 points after dropping to dead last on Day 2.

July 9 – No contest day

July 9 dawned as a wave day, with overcast and lennies over the entire Air Sailing area. After launching an unsuccessful sniffer, Jimmy Hamilton cancelled the last contest day. As it turned out, three contestants—Matt Herron (1JW), David Prather (6J) and Tim Taylor (W)—all did fly later in the day, all contacted the wave and all made it to at least 23,000 feet directly over Air Sailing in the Pyramid Wave Window. Tim and David appear to have achieved Diamond Altitude, a great end to a great week of flying.

Tim Taylor (W), in his first appearance at the Air Sailing Sports Class Contest, took first place in a Ventus, followed closely by 2003 winner Jim Gager (BY) in his PW-5. Another newcomer to the Air Sailing contest, Russell Holz (DP), took third place overall flying his Vega. We had a safe and fun week in very varying weather, and all contestants learned a lot in this low-key environment of friendly competition.

Charlie Hoke (competitor/Dart 15 pilot) is a Captain in the USAF and teaches aeronautical engineering at the Air Force Academy. Charlie was tapped to give a safety briefing during a pilot meeting and put some interesting notes on the blackboard for us regarding stall speeds at high density altitudes.

Many thanks go to the people who made the contest possible: Jimmy Hamilton as CD, Ground Operations, and actual Manager; Pat Downing as Scorer; Norma Burnette as ASI Contest Ground; Lee Edling as Chief Tow pilot for the Contest (Lee also had the site looking fabulous in his role as Caretaker); Bob Spielman and Colin Aro as tow pilots; Air Sailing, Inc for providing the site and one tow plane, and Nevada Soaring Association for providing a second tow plane and oxygen service.

By Air Sailing tradition, Tim Taylor is now on tap to run the contest in 2006, and we hope to see many more of you at Air Sailing next year.

The 2005 Gerlach Dash

By Cindy Donovan

We had thirteen gliders start: Vern Frye, Jeremy Zawobmy, Bob McKay (Dave Prather flew the return), Rich Miller, JJ Sinclair, Varian Harris, Matt Herron, Peter Neumann, Rolf Peterson, Jonathan Hughes, John Boyce, Cindy Donovan and Jerry Mowbray. The forecast was for 17K max altitude with little wind, the reality was more like 12K with little wind. Bob McKay led the way. Eight made it to Gerlach (two needed Blue Tow's assistance). Vern took the Norma Burnette plaque while JJ retained his lead in the number of Alex Burnette plaques in his home.

Whether by air or car, pilots and support crew all arrived in time for the lamb feast at Bruno's. With some 200 other guests, we enjoyed the hospitality and the mad house (especially at the bar) of such a large crowd. The food was good, the price was right but the raviolis were missed!

Hoping to attract pilots from really far away, the Air Sailing runways were recently repainted in the language used in the Centaurus star system.

(Dash, continued) On Sunday, the launch started at about 1 pm. JJ and Eagle put theirs on trailers for the return, leaving six launches from Gerlach on Sunday. Only Dicky Bird needed a tow off Flanigan on the way home.

Many thanks offered to those who made this happen:

Contest Director: Vern Frye
Start Gate: Jay Sumter

Finish Gate: Norma Burnette
Tow: Lee Edling and Bob Spielman

Gas tow: Frank Waxman

Scorekeeper: Dave Prather

Shade and facility provision: Dave Prather and Bob McKay

Water, Watermelon and Cantaloupe: Norma Burnette

Help Save Air Sailing History!

If you have any old or new pictures of Air Sailing, Norma Burnette would like to put them in the Air Sailing Scrapbooks. Please send your photos to Norma at 1285 Baring Blvd #172, Sparks, NV 89434.

It Runs in the Family

By Bob Spielman

McKinley Siegfried soloed on her 14th birthday on July 1st, 2005. Her father, Rand, was her instructor. Rand had soloed on his 14th birthday and McKinley's grandfather, Bob, is a glider instructor and a retired airline pilot. Rand also was the tow pilot for McKinley's three solo flights with the Nevada Soaring Association at Air Sailing, NV. The day before Rand soloed his friend's son, Jacob Savage, 15, in the club's Schweizer 2-33. Jacob's dad, Sam, was Rand's glider student in the 1970s. McKinley and Rand live at Pine Mountain Lake and Rand flies his classic Beech 18 to Air Sailing.

Did you know?

All the pilots of Burt Rutan's SpaceShip One were required to get their glider ratings.

The Deadline for the December Issue is November 1.

Calendar:

October 1	Fall Regular Trustee Meeting	Ty White	510-739-2190
October 1	Awards Banquet & Auction	Ty White	510-739-2190

AIR SAILING NEWS

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