

# Air Sailing News



Editor: Eric Norris

ASI web site: <http://www.airsailing.org/>

Winter/Spring 2009

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Winter at Air Sailing

## 2009 Spring Clean-Up is April 18

By Cindy Donovan

April 18th is the Spring Work Day at ASI, commencing at 10AM. This is a great opportunity to find out what your fellow ASI supporters have been up to over the winter, what the plans are for the summer and get a little work done that will make life easier during the flying season. Last year we had 60 plus folks donating 300+ hours to general maintenance and improvements to the ASI facilities. The list of activities (scrubbing, weeding, hammering, fixing and sweeping) all need your special touch! The good news is that the fence doesn't need to be painted this year! The best news is that lunch is free!

So, put it on your calendar NOW. The party commences on the 18th!

Contact: Cindy Donovan  
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## President's Corner

By Ty White, President, Air Sailing, Inc.

The new year is here, and the spring/summer

soaring season is almost upon us. From all reports, the gliderport has been very busy since last Fall, with many notable flights in the winter months. Those pilots fortunate enough to fly at Air Sailing year-round will be well-tuned and ready to enjoy the line-up of events planned for this year.

As outlined in the Calendar of Events posted elsewhere in this Newsletter, we'll kick off with the Spring Cleaning Day on April 18, organized by Cindy Donovan. This is a good opportunity to pay your non-monetary dues by coming out to help with some ongoing maintenance projects.

In the first half of June Air Sailing plays host to our very successful Thermal Camp and Cross-Country Camp. The Thermal Camp is in its 15<sup>th</sup> year, and this year long-time Camp Manager Rolf Peterson has turned the reins over to Rob Stone. Many thanks to Rolf for his commitment to making this camp a popular introduction to mountain soaring for many currently active glider pilots, and to Rob for taking this on. Thermal Camp is followed closely by Cross-Country Camp, managed again in this, its 23<sup>rd</sup> year, by David Prather.

Nevada Soaring Association will take off on another Bishop Encampment in late June, followed over the 4<sup>th</sup> of July period by the First U.S. Libelle Gathering, organized by Neita Montague. This should prove to be a unique and historic event at Air Sailing, something worth going out to the gliderport to watch. The very first glass glider I ever saw and helped assemble was a Libelle, owned by one of my professors at Brown in 1970. A million years

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.

Newsletter of Air Sailing, Inc. is published quarterly and is free to members of ASI and to clubs with which we exchange newsletters. Correspondence should be addressed to Editor: Eric Norris at 2635 Benton St., Santa Clara, CA 95051 or gliderboy1955@yahoo.com. Air Sailing, Inc., a 501(c)3 corporation, owns and operates Air Sailing Gliderport exclusively for scientific and educational purposes.

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**Standing Committees**

**Chair**

Executive:	Ty White	Steve Smith	Terry Duncan
Finance:	Terry Duncan		
Fund Raising:	Bernald Smith		
Maintenance:	Ty White		
Nominations:	Terry Duncan		
Publications:	Eric Norris		
Safety	Mark Montague		

**Area Managers**

**Manager**

ASI Tow:	David Volkmann
Memorial Trees:	TBD
Membership:	Ty White
Operations:	Rob Stone
Tie-downs and Hangar	David Volkmann
Web Master / Guest Book:	Rob Stone
Facilities:	Lee Edling

**Nevada Soaring Association**

A club operating at Air Sailing that offers low-cost soaring for members. It also provides introductory rides, instruction, BFRs, a cross-country safari, land out training, encampments, overnights, the Gerlach Dash, and a guest membership program. Contact: Bob Spielman, 250 River Bend Dr, Reno, NV 89523, 775 560-2406, thudpilot1@msn.com

**Air Sailing Membership**

New members, changes of address, lost members coming home... Send your personal information and check to:

Ty White			\$ 50.00
ASI Membership	Donation (Tax Deductible)	+	
41600 Marigold Drive	TOTAL		_____
Fremont, CA 94539			

**Use of Mode C Transponders**

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 (Pacific Soaring Council, Inc.) 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 ATC Letter of Agreement, gliders in the Reno area can transmit on the 0440 transponder code in the blind without establishing radio contact with Reno Approach Control.

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

ago.

In late July Air Sailing hosts a sanctioned Sports Class Regionals managed by Rob Stone, with Steve Smith serving as Competition Director. Our official calendar of flying events will wrap up with the Gerlach Dash in August. All in all, we have a very full calendar, providing something for almost everyone.

If you visit the gliderport right now you will find the site in fine shape, maintained by a team effort of Greg Herold and his wife Marie, who are living at Air Sailing full-time, and Lee Edling who is able to be at Air Sailing some weeks every month. We think it is very important to have someone on the gliderport full-time, and we were lucky that Greg was available to fill in for Lee over the winter months.

A big ongoing effort over the winter has been a project to replace our aging fuel truck with a permanent above-ground fuel tank. The truck was at the end of its life, and Air Sailing member Ed Lord was able to procure a fuel tank at a good price, so we've opted to install a permanent facility. The permitting process for installation of the new tank has involved a new Special Use Permit from the County. David Volkmann has been mainly responsible for the successful approval of this SUP, although many others were involved. The SUP process required obtaining a buy-in from our local Community Advisory Board, and in this Karol Hines greased the wheels through her years-long efforts to maintain a good working relationship with our neighbors and the various county agencies. At this point, we are on track to have the new fuel facility up and operating before the start of the summer season. Many thanks to Ed for making this possible, and to David and others for pushing the SUP.

As a final note, I want to recognize two retiring Air Sailing Trustees, Bob McKay and Pam Sutton. Bob served as Air Sailing Trustee since 1977 - only Bernald Smith has served longer on the Board. Bob's contributions to Air Sailing are countless: he was Air Sailing President from 1989 to 1997, including the vital period when the Air Sailing land was patented from the BLM in 1995. More recently, Bob made the monetary contribution that is the basis for the McKay Endowment. Bob's generous contribution also triggered the Capital Campaign that funded the construction of the

Clubhouse and Bathhouse in 2002. Bob loves Air Sailing more than anyone else I know, and I feel fortunate that I've worked and flown alongside him for so long. I can't count the times in contests and camps that I've landed out, only to watch from the ground as the very wily 6J scraped out and made it home.

Pam Sutton joined the Air Sailing Board in 1999, and she led the Construction Committee during the time of the design and build for the Clubhouse and Bathhouse. Pam organized the effort to obtain approval for our Development Plan with Washoe County in 2004/2005 and she was also vitally involved in the Special Use Permit for the RV Park in 2005/2006. Pam served the Board as Secretary from 2005 – 2008. Pam is taking a break, but I'm hoping to see her in her Discus sooner rather than later. Pam and I kind of grew up together in our soaring careers, starting at Sky Sailing in the early 80s. In 1995 we shared a memorably very bad pasture as an out-landing site during a contest at Crazy Creek, an experience still fresh in my memory. Please join me in thanking Bob and Pam for their dedication and contributions to Air Sailing.



Air Sailing Prepares to Defend the PASCO Egg

## From the Safety Committee

By Mark Montague, Chairman

Last year your ASI Safety Committee set up a Safety Observation Reporting system that worked well for us. We are grateful for each and every report we received, and would like to thank those members who took the time to let us know where our current practices failed to protect us. We are also grateful that our collective accident and incident record was as good as it was, and would like to wish each of you a safe and satisfying 2009 soaring season.

With a year's worth of observations to work with, we can report on some emerging trends. First of all, the most commonly cited problem was an inability to determine whether or not a return to the airfield would be possible. In the great majority of cases, the sailplane hadn't the altitude or airspeed to enable a safe return; the converse problem--that of having sufficient energy to safely reach a runway but not knowing it--did occur, but much less frequently. Let's take a moment to discuss these twin difficulties.

In an electronic age, it is tempting to place all of our faith in some battery-operated gadget that will tell us everything we need to know. Alas, at the current state of the art, no electric gizmo knows as much as you do about the presence of lift or sink between you and the airport! It follows that any information displayed by any gadget is, despite all appearances, really nothing more than an estimate!

It is essential to have some method of figuring altitude required independently of the electronics. Personally, I teach a de-rated-glide estimation that harks all the way back to Carle Conway's classic Joy of Soaring--except that I base my estimates on 60% of the glider's published best glide ratio, vs. the 50% factor advocated by Conway. Why the difference? Two reasons. The first is that in practice, 50% too often turned out to be a bit too conservative. The second is that using a 60% factor makes calculations really easy. Simply take your glider's best L/D straight from the flight manual, move the decimal point one space to the left--the resulting figure is your de-rated glide in nautical miles per 1000' of altitude. It could hardly be simpler!

To take a concrete example, the H301 Libelle's published best L/D is 39. Let's round that to 40. Moving the decimal point one space left, we get 4 nm/1000 ft. Take a white card and (using a sectional chart) mark it along one edge, four nautical miles between "ticks." Label these ticks in thousands of feet, and you have an easy, conservative way of quickly estimating how high you need to be at any given location in a Libelle in order to safely glide to the airport or to any other safe landout site. Use this to back up your electronic glide computer and you'll never have that nagging feeling that maybe things aren't going as well as they should. And, of course, it is virtually impossible to convince yourself that this estimated altitude required derived from a piece of cardboard is the gospel truth! Its very limitations remind you to look out the window and search for evidence you should adjust your glide estimate.

How about another example? The ASK 21 manual claims a best L/D of 34. This is close enough to 35, so let's figure the ASK 21 should cover 3.5 nm/1000 ft, or 7 nm in 2000 feet. By the way, another way of looking at de-rating the published glide to 60% of its claimed value is that doing so assumes the loss of 40% of the glider's performance. While we usually consider ourselves to be compensating for the sink between thermals, we could also think of this as allowing for a headwind equal to up to 40% of our glider's speed for best glide--or 30%, if we want to leave ourselves a little margin. Since most unballasted gliders achieve their flattest glides at about 50 kt, this amounts to allowing for  $(0.30 \times 50\text{kt}) = 15$  knots of headwind. Most of us have difficulty using thermals in winds much above this figure--they're pretty well shredded by the wind--so in practice this de-rate factor works for any day when we're likely to be out thermal-hunting anyway.

This method has worked well for me and for many of my students, but if you have another method you like better, by all means use what works for you. The important thing is to always back up your electronic glide computer with some sort of independent mental computation. "But my PDA said I could make it!" just isn't good enough.

Another area where we are at risk, according to last year's Safety Observations, is early in the tow. Nationwide, pilots continue to be injured--or worse--in the immediate aftermath of rope breaks, false releases, and the like. Last year we had two premature termination of tow incidents within a very short period. One ended up as a very close call; the other was a textbook rope break drill. The difference? It appears that the difference was in the pilots' preflight mental preparation. Give yourself that edge--plan for an emergency before every takeoff! If you do this, you will practically guarantee a successful outcome. You'll also find the takeoff and early tow to be much less stressful, and more enjoyable.

Most of us will shortly take off for our first flight of the season. ASI strongly recommends that your first flight be with a current CFI; in case you're wondering if I practice what I preach, in a few days I'll take my first flight, with Rob Stone along to help scrape away a winter's worth of rust. (He'll have his work cut out for him, I'm sure.) Particularly early in the season, remember that high density altitude doesn't matter only during takeoff or landing: it also matters whenever you're maneuvering close to high terrain. Simply put, the time to discover that your turning circle is bigger than you think isn't when you're on the ridge!

Finally, a word about collision avoidance. When the Pine Nut midair took place in 2006, many other soaring groups had to play "catch-up." Air Sailing, by contrast, emerged as the one operation with an existing, well-developed collision avoidance program. This didn't happen by accident, and each of us should be proud of the effort collectively expended by this group. However, this is a problem that won't go away, and we simply can't rest on our laurels. Whenever you fly, scan the airspace around you as if your life depends on it. (It does.) At all times know which Reno runway is in use, the local arrival and departure route and altitudes, and plan to minimize time spent crossing these routes. When you do cross them, plan ahead so that cockpit duties won't interfere with a diligent traffic scan, and if circumstances dictate that you loiter in a known high-traffic area, by all means make a radio call to Reno Approach (it's a free call!) and let them know who you are, where you are, and that you're on the frequency. Especially when wave soaring, remember that a stationary object--that's you--is particularly difficult to spot; remember also that very few gliders allow for an unobstructed view aft--and none allow for a view aft and downwards.

It's time for me to climb down off my soapbox now, and in closing I'd like again to wish everyone a fantastic summer of soaring out of Air Sailing!



ASI Tractor Awaits Lee Edling's Return

## WSPA European Seminar

From a WSPA News Release

The women glider pilots of Slovenia are delighted to invite you to the Women Soaring Pilots Association's (WSPA) first European seminar. The thirty-first Women's Soaring Seminar will be held at the Alpine Flying Centre Lesce (ALC Lesce) on the sunny side of the Alps in Slovenia from July 18 to July 23, 2009.

The WSPA was founded June 11, 1986 in Tucson, Arizona. The charter meeting was the result of a year's effort and input by the women pilots who attended the 1985 Women's Soaring Seminar at the Air Sailing Gliderport in Reno, Nevada.

There are many soaring possibilities as ALC Lesce, Slovenia, as the gliderport is surrounded on the north side by the mountain range of Karavanken and on the northwest side by the Julian Alps. Cross country flights via the Austrian Alps towards Germany and to the west across Italy into Switzerland are just some of varied tasks you could choose. One big challenge to consider is a 500 km FAI triangle just inside Slovenia.

The Lesce field is glorious grass. The runway is 1.150 m long and 60 m wide, with geographical course 134° - 314°. Towing is done by two Piper Pawnees. There is a classroom in the Club premises for the seminar lectures. In the same building the restaurant offers meals and near the hangar is a small clubhouse which is used for picnics and meetings after flying. In the same area there is a camping site and in the village of Lesce you can find various accommodations.

The Lesce-Bled airfield is a flyer's paradise with three Blaniks, a DG-500, seven single-seat DGs, an LS 8, an aerobatic Fox and some private gliders. We are looking into the use of gliders from other clubs and from private owners.

Seminar talks will include an orientation on the first day about the gliderport and air space by Boštjan Pristavec. Branko Brodnik will speak on aviation medicine topics. Andrej Kolar, creator of See You has a presentation on his program and on glider instruments, Boris Žorž will be our expert on local meteorology. There will also be an opportunity to learn about the building of and the materials used in sailplanes and we will see the production of gliders.

## FIRST U.S. LIBELLE GATHERING

JULY 3-7 2009  
Air Sailing, Nevada

Contact Neita Montague  
[neitalibelle@aol.com](mailto:neitalibelle@aol.com)

## *Calendar:*

**April 18:** Spring Work Party – Cindy Donovan, Donovan\_c@sbcglobal.net or 510-339-6315.

TBD: Spring Regular Meeting of the ASI Board of Trustees, Air Sailing Gliderport, NV – Ty White, 510-504-2217, tylerwhite@earthlink.net

**June 8-12:** 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Thermaling Camp – Robert Stone, 775-240-9461  
RStone118@charter.net

**June 14-19:** 23<sup>rd</sup> Air Sailing Cross-Country Camp – David Prather, 3179 Boeing Road, Cameron Park, CA 95682, 530-748-7275, dwprather68@yahoo.com.

**June 24-28:** NSA Bishop Encampment – Bob Spielman, 775-345-0410, thudpilot1@msn.com

**July 3-7:** First U.S. Libelle Gathering – Neita Montague, Neitalibelle@aol.com

**July 20-25:** Air Sailing Sports Class Regionals – Robert Stone, 775-240-9461  
RStone118@charter.net

**August 8-9:** Gerlach Dash – Bob Spielman, 775-345-0410, thudpilot1@msn.com

TBD: Fall Regular Meeting of the ASI Board of Trustees, Air Sailing Gliderport, NV – Ty White, 510-504-2217, tylerwhite@earthlink.net

TBD: Air Sailing Awards Banquet and Silent Auction, TBD

## ***AIR SAILING NEWS***

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