



THE BUZZARD

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA SOARING ASSOCIATION

July 2002

A MAGIC DAY

By Mike Schneider

The date: Saturday, June 19, 1993, two days before the summer solstice.

The problem: I have been trying to fly 1000 Km in a glider since 1989. This will be my 5th attempt.

The background: The first 1000Km flight in thermal conditions in the Sierra was flown in 1981 by a foreigner just in town who didn't realize it couldn't be done. Since then a number of 1000 Km flights have been flown in the eastern Sierra Nevada, mostly in open class sailplanes, but this distance is becoming more popular as people realize that it can be done. 1000 km has not yet been accomplished out of Truckee.

The aircraft: Glasflugel Mosquito-B, N4UK

The story: Today is predicted to be hot in northern California. Since this is often an indicator of good soaring in the Sierra, I am cautiously optimistic about the weekend, but made no special preparations other than a good dinner with Steve McRobert as we carpoled up to Truckee Friday evening. I have been flying a lot this season since I am in the middle of a divorce and flying takes my mind away from it. Now it is Saturday morning. I put the plane together, fill it with water just in case the forecast is indeed good. Breakfast will have to wait a while. I am running late. Ah, the forecast will probably be crummy anyway. Mark Matthews finally gets the forecast and it looks terrific. Time to go. No time for breakfast now. I prepare the barograph, take the declaration board photos, push the glider to the threshold of runway 19 and accomplish a hundred small tasks which are required for a successful flight. Breakfast will have to wait until tomorrow. I wait at the end of runway 19 while 2 or 3 sailplanes took off ahead of me. I am anxious. Time is wasting. Takeoff is at 11:27. The air is already cooking. I have just taken off and am already an hour behind my schedule. I take an 1800 ft tow and notch the barograph. I have to be careful about releasing too high. If I stay on tow too long I will have a distance penalty to pay, and according to my flight planning I cannot afford it. But 1800 ft is a low tow with a load of water. Not much time to look around for lift, and if I have to land and wait in line for a relight, the day is certainly lost.

After the notch, I pull up right into lift and ride my first thermal to 11,000. So far, so good. But I'm running late. Time to head out. No time or need to visit Mt. Rose. I should have been in the air sooner. The air is cooking.

I head out over the Tahoe basin, and glide into the north end of it into the Carson valley. No time to go to Virginia city, as pressed as I am for time. I find lift to 11,000 again east of Carson City and press on to the Pinenuts. Where's the lift that should be here? I'm getting low. Scraping the rocks on the spine of the Pinenuts just north of Siegel. Why isn't it here? Bang--a boomer. Finally! (I was getting worried). On to Mt. Siegel. Up to 15,000 ft. Which way to go? The Sierra looks great, but that's not direct. Mt. Patterson looks good. OK, go for it. Lift to 15,000 at Mt. Patterson. The Sierras still look good but I ignore them. I head across Mono lake. Dumb move. I'm lowish at big sand flat south of Mono. Finally, I find something to 13,000. I head southeast, down to 11,000 again. On to Glass Mountain. Some lift there. Now on to White Mountain Peak. Down to 11,000 again. I have to climb up the side of the peak. That takes time. Scraping the rocks again, this time on the Whites. Finally I'm up to 15,000. The Whites are NOT working all that great today. Some clouds, non-continuous streeting on the north end. I'm finally on top of the Whites. My plan is to spend 5-6 hours here today. Heading south I'm still an hour behind schedule. Each run down the Whites/Inyos should take about 1:15 at 85 mph. I'm planning to do that four times. It's going to be a long day (I hope) but I don't know if the Whites are working well enough to keep my speed high enough for success. This flight is going to be more a question of speed than distance. I have to average about 85 mph for the next 5-6 hours or I'll run out of daylight. My flight planning has me landing at 7:30 PM. It's worth a shot.

Heading south, I make my first turnpoint, the intersection of Hwys 190 & 136 south of Keeler at 3:30 pm, an hour behind schedule and 380 Km south of Truckee. Time to head north. This trip along the Whites/Inyos is quicker, 88 mph. Conditions have improved a bit. I arrive at my 2nd turnpoint, Basalt, on the north end of the White mountains, at 4:46 pm. Now comes the real decision. I am already 130 miles south of Truckee and it is time to turn south again. Tough to do. This means that there's no way I'm going to make it back close to Truckee this evening. If I abort the task now, I can probably get back in time for a late dinner. I turn south.

Charlie Westernin (A5) is trying to raise his crew and musing his landing site options way down south. I'm following Charlie out of Truckee today but he's on the Sierra, and I'm running the Whites. I comment, "only 3 hours to go", and get a confused response from A5, "but I've already been up for 6." I respond, "Yeah, me too" to which the response is only silence. I fly my third trip along the Whites/Inyos at 78 mph, turning Keeler, on the southeast side of Owens lake at 6:09. "Only" 230 miles south of home. I've

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About NCSA

The Northern California Soaring Association (NCSA) is based at the Byron airport, in Byron California. It is the only club giving instruction in the San Francisco Bay Area. The club encourages neophyte members to progress through obtaining their private licenses and further development of their soaring skills. The club is active on weekends only and run by volunteers. Because it is not a commercial operation, members are expected to participate in the maintenance of club facilities and aircraft when they are not flying. There are mandatory workdays for NCSA, usually twice a year, to do essential maintenance on aircraft and facilities.

For More information visit our Web site:
www.norcalsoaring.org

The **Buzzard** is published quarterly, give or take or whenever we can get a volunteer. Any other publication is welcome to use any material herein with proper credit given to the source. We'd like to say that everything we print has been checked at least 3 times but lets face it, we save all that caution for flying and let it hang out a bit when it comes to the newsletter, so apologies in advance for any errors or omissions. **Read this newsletter at your own risk.**

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WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS:

Mike Frazin, from Ohio; original trained at Fremont's Sky Sailing
Dave Catt, a Brit, with his Janus A, a beautiful high performance two seater.
Jason Hatton, who actually got his Private Glider Rating in Fayence, France but is starting all over in the US.
Uwe Kleinhempel, who brought his K-6 from Canada and has a Canadian Registration and Pilot's license.

DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT USING THIS PAGE FOR NAVIGATION

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never been this far from home this late in the day--it's going to be a late night. Time to head north again. But now every mile I fly should mean a shorter retrieve. But for whom? I don't have a crew, so I'm going to have to ask some poor soul to come get me wherever I end up. It's going to be a late night.

I took off an hour behind my schedule and I still haven't made up any time. Something has to give. At least I'm flying in the direction of Truckee. The last trip up the Whites/Inyos is at 82 mph. I know I have to get as high as possible before leaving the Whites. Amazingly, things are still booming there. I get to 17,300 near boundary peak, leaving the Whites at 7:25 pm. Finally something is working better than planned. I would never have guessed that I could get to this altitude this late in the day.

Cloudbase is lower immediately to the north, so for a time I am above cloudbase and have to navigate around Cu. I sure am glad for these long Summer days. A few miles to the north, I find my last thermal back to 15,000. I think I can make Yerrington! That should do it! I pass abeam Mt. Grant at 11,000 ft. Steve McRobert calls me while on aerotow from Yerrington, where he's landed out earlier, "I can't believe you're still in the air!"

But I am. The sun is in my eyes and I'm using my compass to navigate for the first time I can remember in a glider. I've never been in the air in a glider this late in the day. It's turning dusk now, and daylight (or lack thereof) is my biggest problem. I can't find the rotating beacon at Yerrington. That turns out to be because the airport is officially closed, with earthmoving equipment and large piles of dirt on the runway! Remember what the FAR's say--check NOTAMS prior to every flight (I didn't). Steve has informed me of the airport situation at Yerrington. People have been using the taxiway (that's where Steve aerotowed from), but it's narrow with encroaching sagebrush. There's also left about 1000 ft of runway pavement that looks OK, but a long landing would result in finding a large pile of dirt. That 1000 ft piece of unfettered runway still looks better to me than a narrow taxiway.

That's where I land, at 8:38 pm, after 9:11 in the air and 1038 Km or 644 miles. There is, shall we say, precious little daylight remaining. The first thing I notice is that the mosquitoes here are terrible (except for my mosquito-B sailplane, which looks beautiful). I'm not tired, not yet. That is to come later. I push the sailplane the length of the closed runway (about a mile) to civilization. Back at Truckee, Mark Matthews very magnanimously volunteers to crew for me. I've made that arrangement by radio relay with Steve prior to landing. So much for preflight planning. Thank you forever Mark.

This is the first "official" 1000 Km flown from Truckee, a fact I still don't understand. Three other 1000 Km flights were flown from Minden the same day. The key to success seems to have been plenty of preflight planning, a relatively early starting day in the Tahoe area, no overdevelopment down south, and a very very long day. But it can be done, even with a CH handicap of 0.98 and wings that need refinishing.

Maybe next year I'll hear about somebody doing 1000 Km in a 1-26. Curt? Everybody's asking me what comes next. How about that long contemplated 2000 Km wave-hopping downwind flight. That would be neat. 2000 Km has only been done twice, never

in the USA, and never straight-out. Besides, the new FAI rules mention a 2000 Km badge. Gee, extrapolating, that should only require about 18-19 hours in the air. Piece of cake.

On July 8, 1993 I received good news from Arleen Coleson. My paperwork had been approved. I was assigned 1000 Km international number 223. I was high for a week.



Mike Schneider has been flying power aircraft since 1981 and gliders since 1984. He holds a diamond badge and 1000Km diplome. He is an ATP and C1FG who enjoys both instructing in the mountains and cavorting solo.

A NOTE OF APPRECIATION TO OUR TOW PILOTS

By Monique Weil

We take our tow pilots for granted too often, giving them a radio check and an off tow word or two but little else. Many of us do not even know their names. We just blindly follow the rope, perhaps oblivious of their situation, after the first two hundred feet have passed. Yet they put themselves at risk for us, carefully do their best to give us a good tow at the speed we ask for, to an area of lift, keeping us within gliding range of the field, looking out for traffic for both of us. They are there waiting patiently for us to get our act together, in glaring hot sun, howling wind, in allergy season and insect biting time.

A few weeks ago, it was a tow pilot, Tom Hail, who pointed out our tail wheel askew as he took the runway to prepare to tow. This is his reply on email after I thanked him for saving us from more trouble than we had:

I always have tried to give the glider I am about to tow a lookover to see if there is anything not right like spoilers, tail dollies, canopies and be sure they are made right before I go. This time it was pretty easy to see the tailwheel hanging at an odd angle and to call out the problem. Being only a power pilot I was always dependent only on myself to get airborne. When I started towing a few years ago, I was impressed with the teamwork required to get a glider airborne. Field manager, wing walkers, pushers, pilots and even the passengers all have to make the Chinese Fire Drill that is a Byron glider launch a smooth and safe event. This event was smooth and safe even though it didn't result in a flight; it brought home to me that I was part of the team that contributes to the safety of the operation. I knew I was but had never actually needed to exercise a call like that before. When the team works well together like it did on Sunday, it is a real pleasure to be out there towing you guys around and around. Even when the wind is howling.

We do appreciate you, our Tow Pilots, without whom we could not fly and enjoy our sport, all of you; even though we can not give you a raise, at least you should have a beer on us at the end of the day, as Doug Lent suggested.

Here is the list of our present Tow Pilots:

Mike Oshell, Ken Ferguson, Troy Myers, Tom Hail, Doug Lent, Dave Cunningham, Dave Stroh, Tom Hird.

LANDING OUT – A CHECK LIST

By Mike Schneider

Let's talk about Landout Kits. No, this isn't an article about where or how to land out. Rather, I'd like for those of you flying cross-country in the Sierra (or thinking of doing so) to do everyone a favor and spend a bit of time thinking about what you'd do if you landed out in the desert and had to spend a day or two of unplanned vacation. Maybe it wasn't an entirely successful landout and now both the glider and your ankle are pretty banged up and the radio is inop. What to do? Or perhaps the situation isn't quite so dire. It's just that you've landed so far in the boonies that your crew won't reach you until morning. In any case wouldn't it be best to have thought about this ahead of time?

I'm sure you all recall from your boy or girl scout days that the most important consideration is shelter. The desert is a harsh place, hot during the day, cold at night. In this case "shelter" probably means using the cockpit of the glider to keep out of the cold and rain, but what if the canopy is broken? You need to have a suitable warm coat for yourself, preferably waterproof (GorTex is ideal), plus a plastic sheet or space blanket to keep the rain out of the cockpit. You can buy a space-blanket at most sporting goods stores for practically nothing. It's just a piece of silvered milar, which reflects the heat. It's lightweight and folds into an amazingly small package, so yes you can afford to carry it. Carry two. To keep your cockpit shelter intact, you need to have some method of tying down the glider. Carry rope to tie down the wingtips. In the event you land at an airport, the rope may be useful for tying down the wings when airport tiedown chains aren't available or don't fit. In the desert, you may be able to tie the ship down using large rocks or mongo sagebrush. Plastic tent stakes are worth carrying as an alternate method of tying down and they're cheap. You can always use a rock to hammer them in. Sunblock lotion is important. Even if you foolishly fly without it, carry a small tube so you don't suffer serious sunburn from a day or two in the desert.

Next to shelter, the next priority in survival is water. You should always carry lots of drinking water on cross-country flights. If you drank all your water, even on a very long flight, you didn't carry enough water. If the ship was water-ballasted, some water will probably remain in the tanks/bags. You might even consider intentionally landing with limited ballast, although there are definite downsides to this.

After shelter and water comes food. Although we can survive a number of days without food, I bring some PowerBars and a can or two of fruit cocktail with a self-opening lid. Whatever you bring should be high-calorie and non-perishable. You'll be surprised how delicious this stuff can be after you've been waiting for your crew for a few hours.

Now for the serious survival gear:

A signal mirror—available from some sporting goods stores, is very helpful to search aircraft. They're thick, not too fragile, and have a sight so you can actually aim it.

▲ Waterproof matches—you may need to start a fire. Cheap, small and light.

▲ A small sterno can or can-type candle—helpful to those of us whose fire starting skills aren't great.

▲ A first aid kit—a small first aid kit with bandages and maybe sutures.

▲ A "leatherman" or Swiss Army knife (or even cheap imitations). These things have everything. You won't need the corkscrew, but you do need a knife blade.

▲ A "campers saw" has rings on each end of a piece of serrated

steel. It might be good enough to cut down a few sage brushes for firewood or to clear a path so you can aerotow out of your field. It's very small and weighs under an ounce.

▲ Insect repellent is also a good idea. I've needed it badly after landing out at Yerrington, NV, where the airport is located right next to the sewage treatment plant. In wetter climates, it may be indispensable.

▲ A small flashlight—an LED flashlight is a good idea since the batteries last forever, but any cheap flashlight (2-AA size) is OK. Check the batteries several times a season to make sure they're good, and make sure the flashlight can't inadvertently turn itself on inside the bag when you try to squeeze the bag into the turtledeck area of the glider before takeoff.

▲ A whistle—much better than shouting.

▲ A small light compass—if you have to walk out.

▲ Duct Tape—1001 uses for this stuff, they even took it to the moon (just in case). You don't need a whole roll, but a small quantity might be useful taping that space blanket over a broken canopy.

▲ Paper to write on (and a pen/pencil)—definitely write a note if you leave the glider

▲ Reading material—a good paperback book can really help during those boring hours waiting for your crew to arrive.

▲ Snake Bite Kit—I hope you don't have to use this, but rattlesnakes are a problem in the desert, and having a small kit might save your life.

▲ Zip-lock bags—if you don't carry these in your cockpit as a relief system, carry a couple in your landout kit to keep things dry. Like duct tape, they have 1001 uses.

▲ A GPS—either panel mounted or, better yet, a handheld GPS for recording the coordinates of the landout (lots of folks have had problems re-finding the glider, especially at night) and to keep you oriented during a walkout.

▲ A handheld aviation transceiver—these have gotten really small in recent years, and can be purchased for \$300 or so. If the aircraft radio quits working after a rough outlanding, you'll need this to communicate. Make sure you give your crew a LAT/LON location, and make sure your crew has a handheld GPS receiver to help locate you.

▲ A cell phone—even an old cell phone purchased at a garage sale and without a cellular subscription is enough. Just make sure the batteries are good. Old analog technology is best. Although there certainly are areas out in the desert without cell service, analog coverage is surprisingly complete. By law, you can dial 9-1-1 from any phone for free, including old cell phones without subscriptions to any plan. If you can't communicate with someone by aircraft radio, don't hesitate to use your cell phone to call someone, including 9-1-1. If you believe you're going to land out, it may be best to use your phone prior to landing. Although not quite legal, strictly speaking, it sure beats being stuck on the ground somewhere without cell service. If in doubt, use the phone. Let people know where you are and what your plans are, "I'm over XYZ and it looks like I'll be landing—LAT/LON is..."

▲ Parachute—a few years ago a pilot attempting an out-landing in the desert crashed, badly injuring his ankle. He fashioned a tourniquet from his parachute to stop the bleeding and, after surgery, recovered from his injuries. In an emergency, your parachute is expendable. The canopy will make a fair blanket or sun shelter and the lines can be used as rope.

▲ General Clothing—I like to fly in long pants, even on fairly hot days. I think it enhances my survivability. Also, make sure you fly in comfortable walking shoes. A landout in the desert may involve many miles of walking, so you don't want to be in sandals.

Yes, I know this sounds like a lot of stuff to bring with you, but actually it's only 5-10 lbs, and will easily fit into a very small duffel bag behind your head in the turtledeck area of the glider. You can just keep the storage bag in the cockpit, ready to go.

REVIEW NOTES FOR THE SUMMER SOARING SEASON:

By Monique Weil

How do YOU prepare for the summer soaring? Listed are some review items

THE PILOT:

Are you in good shape? Mental health as well as physical health? Not stressed out, well rested, with a positive attitude; able to fully focus on the flying tasks? Aware of your capabilities and limitations and ready to improve your skills while having fun?

Are you current and proficient in the ship or ships you plan to fly? Are you mentally prepared? Know thyself: remember your hazardous attitudes and their antidotes. On first flights this year some pilots were observed to be a little rusty or forgetful of the basics: starting take off with dive brakes open, flaps not set, canopy not confirmed closed and locked, gear not down and locked on final approach, coming in high and fast or too low and slow, with incipient spin close to the ground..

It is a good idea to shake out the cobwebs of the winter in your brain before you attempt to fly in the mountains. Get a dual proficiency flight or two and practice energy management in your spot landing practice; proficient at steep coordinated banks; good thermal entry; sharing the thermal; keep your head on a swivel. If you haven't done much recent soaring in the Sierras, schedule dual flights. The terrain and flying conditions are awesome, strong lift, strong sink, few good places to land for beginners; plan to be conservative; get high and stay high. Do not plan to land at the beginning of the runway at Truckee. The runway is long, there can be treacherous sink on final approach and experienced pilots have crashed into the steep cliff at the end of the runway.

The SOARING ENVIRONMENT in high altitudes:

Prepare for the heat:

Water: Carry enough water and drink often even when not thirsty.

You must stay hydrated; take at least 2 qts and have a camel-back type system; Oxygen will contribute to dehydration. Dehydration kills.

Clothing: light weight clothing, preferably long sleeve shirt, pants, hat, sun glasses, a scarf to protect the neck which can be soaked to help keep you cool. Bring a wind breaker; shoes for walking on rugged terrain;

Sunscreen: use sunblock but keep it away from the eyes. Apply again just before flight.

Sunglasses: Bring good sunglasses and if you wear glasses, bring an extra pair of clear prescription glasses if you come home at dusk.

Heat exhaustion: Prevention includes staying in the shade prior to flight; rest and drink water before take off.

Eating: Eat normally, a light lunch, no carbonated soft drinks; avoid caffeinated drinks. Bring some high energy non-melting snack for the flight and after.

Medication: If you have any doubt about medication you are on, consult with your doctor or AME.

Hypoxia: Know your hypoxic symptoms. Altitude chamber training is recommended. Hypoxia affects your judgment and ability to make rational decisions. Go on O2 from 10,000'. Check your oxymizer cannula. Monitor oxygen system and your judgment during flight.

Other physiological problems to watch out for: Bladder emptying, Allergies, Air sickness; Fatigue, Disorientation.

Stress: A large percentage of accidents happen to low time pilots who find themselves in an unanticipated situation and the resultant high stress interferes with their decision making. Monitor your stress level during the flight and find ways to reduce stress by: task reduction, reduce and manage risk and work on improving basic airmanship. Planning at least a couple of steps ahead will help your situation awareness. Preflight planning and review; make go-no go decisions; don't get sucked in to attempt a flight beyond your capabilities and experience level just because your buddy suggested it. Remember your priorities: the Pilot, the Aircraft, the Task. Use check lists; learn how to relax; take deep breaths, stretch your legs and move your feet. Break down the flight into manageable segments; organize your cockpit; drink water continuously; don't dwell on your mistakes, focus on the flight.

Physical Conditioning: Mental alertness will be enhanced by being in good physical shape. Regular exercise is recommended.

PREFLIGHT THE SHIP

Is the glider ready for flight? Critical Assembly Checks; POSITIVE CONTROL CHECKED and verified; washed, polished and taped; canopy cleaned, inside and out; weight and balance calculated (check to be sure unwanted ballast has not been left in the aircraft by a previous pilot); check gear warning; canopy closure; brakes checked, varios checked; weak link if needed; parachute checked; battery fully charged? Oxygen filled, system checked for leaks? You should have an extra mask or oxymizer cannula; Radio reception and transmission checked? Frequencies reviewed and programmed; Tie downs and other survival equipment available, including camel-back type water system and extra water, food, jacket; first aid kit, bug juice; thermal blanket, flashlight, hand held radio, sectional charts, road maps, Emergency phone numbers, etc

CURRENCY AND PROFICIENCY

Are you legally current and have you flown your ship enough in expected conditions to feel proficient: Have you recently reviewed your glider's performance and peculiar characteristics, speeds to fly under different conditions; know how many miles per 1,000' and mark your chart accordingly. Have you had recent dual practice in dealing with simulated rope breaks and other emergencies including recovery from slack line and feel reasonably accurate in: low-energy spot landings without use of altimeter; have you considered effect of high density altitudes on take off and landing performances as well as increased turning radius; how is your proficiency in gusty conditions and turbulence? Strong wind gradient? turbulent, crosswind take offs and landings? Slips with no dive brakes?

Have you studied the charts of your proposed flight area and prepared them for safe glides to good landing areas and selected options for alternates? Study the proposed terrain, plan points of no return. Review airspace, airports, frequencies, traffic patterns, obstructions, areas to avoid due to high density jet traffic etc.? Review your take off and landing check lists: remember that **COMPLACENCY KILLS!**

GROUND HANDLING

Take special care when being ground towed in strong crosswind. Remember that the downwind wing is the critical wing to hold; the Blanik is particularly susceptible to weather cocking; try to get additional crew in very strong winds. Do not leave the glider unattended at the flight line.

The next three check lists are from Richard Pearl's talk on the fallacy of flight safety at our March 23rd Safety seminar. He talked about "**bold print**" items to put to memory:

LAUNCH

Check Pilot (are you ready?)
Check Wind
Pre launch check list
Scan Area
Check Rope
Wing Runner in position
Think Rope Break & Recovery

TOW

Positive communication with tow plane
Eyes glued to tow plane
Anticipate problem(s) in initial ground roll
Anticipate action for low level rope break
Keep in position
Be ready to release
Proper Release

LANDING

Get Mentally Prepared
Use Check List
Every Landing Should be a Spot Landing
Aviate, Navigate, Communicate
Multi-Use Airports:
Expect the Unexpected
Communication, Vigilance required
Landing Gliders/sequencing

RADIO USE IN THE SAILPLANE ENVIRONMENT

Basic principles:

The radio in the soaring environment should be used mostly as a safety instrument to communicate vital information to traffic in the pattern, to your crew or base (e.g. Air Sailing or Truckee Base), to other sailplanes, or to get needed information for flight safety and assistance from ATC (flight following; traffic advisories). The main glider frequencies are 123.3 (Air Sailing), and 123.5 (Truckee Base) You will hear these often misused and overused for idle chatter; this ties up the frequency and may cause problems due to inability to communicate safety issues.

Keep in mind that talking or listening on the radio is a major distracting agent keeping the pilot from attending to flying.

Remember: **AVIATE, NAVIGATE, COMMUNICATE.**

It is a good idea to turn the radio down when cruising to avoid this distraction.

The message structure is:

who are you calling, e.g. "Truckee Traffic"

who you are? "Glider 3FB"

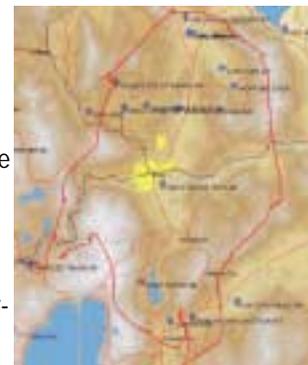
Location (and request) "entering left down wind, number

two for runway one nine Truckee; we have the Cessna on base in sight" Before talking, be sure radio is set to properly transmit and receive on correct frequency. Keep transmissions brief and concise. Think about and rehearse what you want to say; Listen to make sure frequency is clear; wait for silence. Hold the mike close to your mouth -1-2 inches. Press mike switch and speak. When calling a busy controller, such as Reno Approach Control, wait for a response before transmitting your request: e.g. "Reno Approach, Glider 3981C, request", wait until Reno Approach replies, e.g.: "Glider 3981C say request", "Glider 3981C Verdi Peak one three thousand squawking 0440, requesting flight following northward to Pyram intersection". Approach replies: "Glider 3981C, squawk 0421 ident". You reply "0421 and ident for 3981C". If you are in communication with ATC be sure to let them know before leaving the frequency "Approach, Glider 3981C is requesting frequency change, thanks for your help".

TRUCKEE FLYING AND THE TIP FORECASTS

By Jim Conger

I just about had to fly May 30. I had talked the ever-generous Dr. Jack Glendening into doing a daily automated (TIP) soaring forecast for Truckee. The poor blighters at Truckee had been making do with the Minden forecast. (Imagine using second-hand weather - tisk, tisk!) Dr. Jack had the forecast machinery running in no time, but the question remained - Did the forecast have anything to do with the actual soaring conditions?



There was only one way to find out. Your intrepid aviator bombed up to Truckee determined to taste every inch of the atmosphere. Unfortunately, the TIP forecast for the 30th of May did not look promising. Lift was expected to be weak, and broken up by the 12 - 20 knot winds aloft. Thermals were forecast to climb to 12,500 feet, which is low by Truckee standards (the airport is at 5,900 feet, and the surrounding terrain is above 10,000 feet in several directions.) Finally, no marker Cus were forecast. Sigh!

Upon arriving at the airport it was clear that the forecast was all too close to reality. The air had a somewhat "used" look to it, as if it had spent too much time in a trailer park. No Cus were visible, and the wind was picking up from the southwest. I knew that I wanted the forecast to be accurate, but couldn't it be accurate and optimistic at the same time?

Never mind. I had the Mini Nimbus together in no time, and decided to get science underway. Takeoff was at 11:30 AM. I pulled the release at 1600 feet AGL in a nice little 3 knot thermal. It pooped out at about 10K, allowing me to foolishly head for the usual "sure thing" hotspot that happened to be in the downwash from the 12 knot wind over a ridge. (Mental note: Don't fly into certain sink.) I snuck back to my first thermal and started over.

Run number two got me up to the edge of Mt. Rose at 12K after two modest climbs. Looking into the Carson valley I could see lots of blue. The only Cus looked 50 miles away to the east. I had to decide: A nice boring day measuring the atmosphere like I was supposed to, or an exciting sled ride into the certain sink of the Carson valley? I chose the sled. Sure enough, the Carson valley was dead. I got through the downwash from the wind falling out of

the Sierras, with about 10K of altitude. I was using Carson City airport as my "out", and it seemed to be getting larger all of the time. I inched around to the north of the field hoping for a save, but pattern altitude came up in no time. Down went the gear, and I let the Cessna entering the pattern know where I was. (He did not sound at all pleased.)

Just as I was turning towards the IP I slammed into a 6 knot thermal. No centering required – I had blundered right into the middle of the beast. I climbed the first 1000 feet with my wheel down (not believing in good fortune) but then pulled up the gear and climbed quickly to 11K. I enjoyed letting the Cessna know that I was now well above the pattern. (I take his silence on the radio as being a loud "What The?")

With a bit of altitude in the bank, I headed south towards Minden to see if anyone was flying there. No one at Minden was foolish enough to launch, much less fly cross-country. I turned around and started north towards Air Sailing. It was still completely blue, so I headed for ridge lines, hoping to find invisible cloud streets beneath them. Sure enough, there were bands of lift aligned with the ridges. I managed to get a princely 12K as I wandered northward.

Switching the radio the Reno tower, I started my trek across the jet freeway. Sure enough, a 737 announced a 30 mile visual approach and appeared at my altitude about four miles away. Reno was not very busy, and I skipped across without another sighting. Lift improved as I worked to the north-east. I kept fidgeting with my glide computer to figure out when I had Air Sailing within safe reach, but the improving conditions made this a waste of time. I made a pass over Air Sailing from 14K, and had plenty of altitude to run the corner and head for Stead and then home.

The issue getting back to Truckee was the little matter of 15 to 20 knots of wind blowing right over the Verdi ridge, creating an enormous wave of sinking air. To get back I had to get high enough to pass over the falling wave. I kept inching along, spending half my energy thermaling in weak lift, and the other half fiddling with the glide computer. I was right at final glide to Truckee, but my computer did not know about the wave of sink.

Determined to get home, I put the nose down and headed directly into the ridge to get through the downwash as quickly as possible. I passed the crest and then headed south, hoping to connect with another thermal that would assure me a safe trip home. I was down to about 10K near Verdi Peak. The glide computer said I could make Truckee pattern altitude despite the wind, but I was strongly tempted to turn tale for the safe haven of Stead before that option vanished behind the Pevine ridge.

I need not have worried. Verdi peak had enough weak lift to get me another 1000 feet of safety altitude, and I zoomed back towards home base. Of course, I ended up 1000 feet high when I got back to Truckee, so I did not need the safety margin. On the other hand, I sleep well at night, so it was probably worth it.

The scientific conclusion? Dr. Jack's TIP forecast was spot-on. The strength of lift and the maximum thermal heights were within a few percentage points. In addition, the related BLIPMAP charts correctly predicted that conditions would be stronger to the east. These forecasts are so good that looking out the window is likely to be a thing of the past (just kidding!)

(TIP and BLIPMAP forecasts are available from Dr. Jack's web page: HYPERLINK "<http://www.dr-jack.net/>" <http://www.dr-jack.net/>)

The data is updated each morning, although updates occasionally fail when the NWS and other data sources fail to provide the necessary inputs.)

MEMORIAL FOR FRANCIS ALLENDER

by Monique Weil

NCSA Members together with family and other friends of Fran sadly commemorated our dear friend at Byron March 23, in an informal Memorial.

We had our annual Safety Seminar in the morning and the barbecue which followed (organized by Richard Duggan) was the start of the Memorial. There were over 50 present and we had the opportunity to get acquainted with Fran's family and other friends. Some came from far away. Fran's brother Rev flew his Cessna 140 from Seattle but had to leave it in Red Bluff due to weather and rented a car. A couple came from Oregon. NCSA's former A&P and close friend of Fran, Bob Hancock also lives in Washington state and came via Hong Kong, Korea and Los Angeles, finally renting a car in Sacramento.

I accompanied Mike Oshell who skillfully piloted our Scout 16Y over and around the clouds to scatter Fran's ashes on Mt Diablo, per Fran's expressed wishes. Fran had enjoyed many flights over Mt Diablo, in gliders and his own Cessna and the mountain is now a fitting resting place for him. The weather was cloudy and windy but the sun came out in time and provided an opening in the clouds for us. Fran's friends can now say hello to him when they fly near Mt Diablo.

Afterwards, we gathered in front of the hangars for wind shelter and shared anecdotes about Fran. Fran was awarded a posthumous award at our annual banquet and Fran's widow, Betty Ann was presented with a plaque: "Fran Allender, 5/2/29-11/16/01, Blue Skies and Cus for ever". Betty Ann was very grateful for our participation in this memorial and wanted to express her thanks to all who were present; similar sentiments were expressed by Fran's daughter JoAnne; JoAnne's mother Bernita, grand daughter Allison, brother Rev, long time friends Oren and Freddie Allen and others.

I felt Fran's presence among us and there was joy in recalling such a fine human being as well as sadness in losing him so suddenly. Fran had been a club member for about a dozen years, was a close friend and flying buddy to a number of us and spent many dozens of hours working at all times in various maintenance projects to benefit the club. Fran, we miss you.

NCSA raised almost twice the amount needed to plant and maintain a Tree in the Air Sailing Memorial Grove as well as his name engraved in a granite monument there. The balance will go toward the Air Sailing Capitalization Fund.

NCSA HAS A NEW WEB URL
www.norcalsoaring.com

ENCOURAGEMENT TO NCSA'S ACTIVE STUDENTS

As of press time here is a list of our active students:

PRE SOLO STUDENTS:

Norman Freitas
Jason Hatton
Jack Franklin
Chase Myers
Tim Uphaus

POST SOLO STUDENTS:

Charlie Ferguson
Lee Grisham
Dusty Howell
Paul Vincent

Watch this space for achievements

Congratulations to:

A Badge: **Charlie Ferguson**

A Badge: **Lee Grisham**

B Badge: **Lee Grisham**

Private Pilot Glider: **Thomas Daniel**

Bronze Badge: **Andres Glassow**

Gold Badge: **Peter Madams?**

Diamond Altitude: **Dave Cunningham** 25,400'

Highest Altitude this year at Byron: **Yuliy Gerchikov**, 12,500'

SUMMER PLANS AT BYRON

We plan to operate as usual all summer as we did last summer, with an instructor, a tow pilot and a field manager. As of now, the instructor load will be shared by Monique Weil, Buzz Graves and Tom Hird. We strongly encourage students and others who plan

to fly at Byron during the summer to communicate in advance with the instructors and the ncoar list for planning purposes. We had a very busy summer last year, with 200 instructional flights. We plan to have at least 2 ships at Byron this summer EV, 972 and possibly 81C, depending on when it is back on line. Our other 3 ships, 3FB, SS and 3AS will be at Truckee when they have not been reserved and approved by the board for Thermal or Cross-country camps etc.

SAFETY REMINDERS ABOUT THE BLANIKS

Blanik AS has just had its tail wheel connections repaired with the excellent workmanship of **Sam Tucker**. We were very lucky there was no structural damage and that the ship did not have to be disassembled and moved. Let this broken tail wheel serve as a reminder to all Blanik drivers: The tail wheel of the Blanik is very WEAK and needs special treatment: If a front seat person is heavy, the nose dips down, then the tail slams down in recovering. Have someone brace the tail to avoid this. Take off with trim slightly forward of neutral to get weight off the tail as soon as possible in take off roll. Land on the main wheel, NOT a two point landing. On landing roll, gradually hold stick back as you tap the brakes. Avoid hard braking, which will pitch the nose forward and then slam tail down.

Another Blanik problem we have experienced is the tow release mechanism. On a previous occasion, the tow release mechanism failed to open completely when the release lever was pulled and the rope was under tension, preventing a release. Please ensure that the tow rope has disconnected by VISUALLY WATCHING THE TOW ROPE RELEASE prior to turning away!!!! If you experience a problem in flight, try removing the rope tension by using soft-release techniques. If this doesn't work, have the other pilot try his/her release, then let the tow pilot know you have a problem by using the radio. Once on the ground, notify a maintenance person of the problem



THE BUZZARD

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA SOARING ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 26, BYRON, CA 94514