

DUST DEVIL TRIBUNE

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Annual Meeting with El Paso Air Traffic Control

On Monday, March 14th, John Hardy, T.J. Neely, and Chris Fleming attended the 2nd Annual Air Safety Meeting between the El Paso Soaring Society and the El Paso Air Traffic Controllers (ATC).

Our glider club operates only 8 miles away from the El Paso International Airport (ELP), which is closer than any other glider club to any other international airport! Since we are so close to ELP, we need to work closely with ATC to make our operation safe. Without a close relationship be-



tween our club and ATC, the risk of a collision between a glider and an airliner would be unacceptably high. Not only would such an accident be an immediate tragedy, the after effects would destroy our club, and permanently harm our sport. Our relationship with ATC is one of mutual respect, and we are working together to proactively coordinate our operations to prevent a disaster. This cooperation

extends beyond our annual safety meetings! Each pilot is responsible for flying their glider in a way that is consistent with agreed-upon procedures developed between representatives of our club and ATC. Failure to follow these procedures would impose an unnecessary risk to you, other pilots, passengers, our club, and our sport.

Our current procedure of calling ATC prior to glider operations will continue, but in addition to telling them the maximum distance from Horizon Airport our gliders will go, and the maximum altitude our gliders will climb, we now will also tell them how many gliders we expect to have in the air. If we need to change any of these statistics during the day, we will need to update ATC. We will also continue to call ATC to tell them that we are done flying for the day. Also: if you choose to fly your glider beyond the distance given to ATC, you should (Continued on Page 5).

What Soaring is All About

“Perfectly framed in the canopy, against the bluish cloudbase, a thousand feet overhead, was the most majestic hawk I've ever seen.”

One humorous incident from this past weekend. On Saturday, my first flight after a long hiatus, I was in the Grob 103 at about 7800 (3800 AGL) trying to keep the glider in a well-coordinated turn, at the correct air-speed, in the thermal and using the horizon as my primary attitude reference instead of the airspeed indicator. Needless to say I wasn't that impressed with my performance and was fairly sure the instructor wasn't either.

It seemed I could get 2 or 3 out of 4 but was struggling to get that smooth coordination of all activities at the same time that just seemed to 'miraculously hap-



pen' whenever Chris demonstrated how to center a thermal in a steep bank. But, not one to quit, I continued to try to keep all the plates spinning and my focus intensified as my muscles started to ache from the tension in my arms, legs and every other part of my body. Then, almost softly from the back seat I heard Chris say, "Are you ready for a religious experience?" My eyes scanned the horizon as I tried to assess what impending disaster I had gotten us into. With fear edged in my voice I tried a confident, "Sure!" as

a reply. Chris replied, once again in an almost hushed voice, "then look straight up." With visions of the underbelly of a 747 filling the canopy or at the very least another sailplane I was about to plow into I did as directed...and beheld the vision. Perfectly framed in the canopy, against the bluish cloudbase, a thousand feet overhead, was the most majestic hawk I've ever seen. Turning with us in the same thermal for a moment it seemed

that time stopped and I realized this was what it was all about, we were brothers, certainly not equals because that hawk will always know a thousand times more than I

ever will about this space. But for a moment we reveled in the same air currents and I admired his grace and skill. So, with relief born of not having flown us into the intake of some airliner's jet engine or endangered some other air adventurer, I promised myself not to forget this moment and just why I was there. Of course, there are at least two or three other good lessons about awareness, focus and tunnel vision not to forget as well.

By: Scott Levins

Mountain Wave Flight to 18,000 feet!

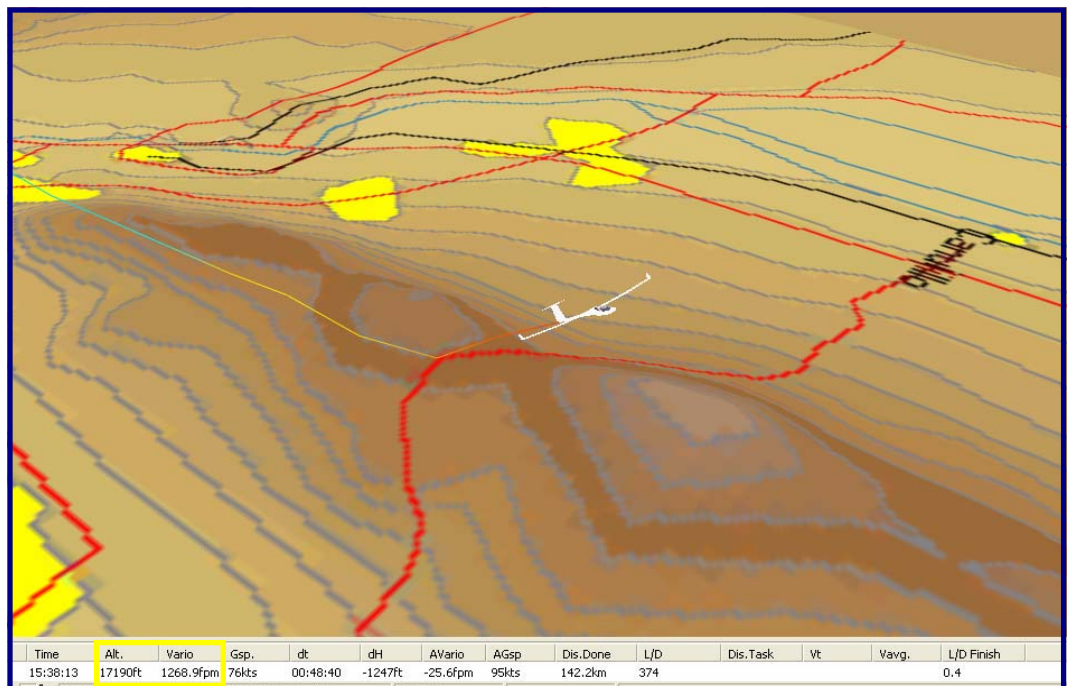
“I began surfing the primary wave up and down the mountain range at over 100 knots, all the while maintaining altitude!”

We had textbook mountain wave conditions Friday, March 18th, and Todd Wichman and I were both eager to pull out our shiny new gliders to give it a try! I launched first at 7:00am, and found weak lift west of the airport. Lenticular clouds, the signposts for mountain waves, filled the sky to the north, so I quickly requested clearance from El Paso Approach on my radio to transition the Class ‘C’ Airspace northbound. With my clearance in hand, I flew north searching for stronger lift, and I found it!

I climbed in consistent 500 fpm lift while zig-zagging my way up the secondary wave, which was about nine

miles downwind from the primary wave above the Franklin Mountains. Forty-five minutes after launching, I reached 17,900 feet MSL, which is the highest altitude we are allowed to climb. After exploring the secondary wave for a while, I turned westward, accelerated to 135 knots airspeed, and fought a fierce 50 knot headwind and 2,000 fpm sink to cross over to the primary wave.

After losing over 4,000 feet while flying directly above the El Paso International Airport, I made contact with the strong lift associated with the primary wave. I slowed back to my minimum sink airspeed, and began my climb



This is a screenshot from the SeeYou software which displays data recorded during the wave flight. Here I am climbing through 17,000 feet at over 1,200 fpm!

Mountain Wave Flight, continued

“I was visualizing the wind blowing up the west side of the mountains to form the gorgeous wave clouds which were now about 1,500 feet beneath me.”

back to 18,000 feet while having a beautiful view of the Franklin Mountains beneath me, and the primary lenticular cloud above me. Once I returned to altitude, I began surfing the primary wave up and down the mountain range at over 100 knots, all the while maintaining altitude!

The view was surreal! I was visualizing the wind blowing up the west side of the mountains to form the gorgeous wave clouds which were now about 1,500 feet beneath me. I couldn't get enough of the experience as I just raced back and forth along the wave!

I eventually chose to start heading home, and I began my transition back to the secondary wave. I still had to contend with the 2,000 fpm sink, but now I had a 50 knot tailwind! My on-board computer was telling me that I had a 190 knot groundspeed! I was still on the El Paso Approach Control frequency, and they were enjoying the change of pace of having me do things

they didn't know gliders could do! Always the student, once arriving at the secondary wave I practiced finding and harnessing the lift, and climbed back up to altitude.

All good things must end, though, and so I began another red-line descent southbound, and arrived over Horizon Airport still at 13,000 feet! Before

landing, I caught back up with Todd who also was just returning from his hour-and-a-half wave flight, and we exchanged smiles as our sailplanes passed each other in the



glassy-smooth air. One at a time, we brought our sky machines back to the ground, and shared our day's stories for the rest of the morning.

Unlike our monster thermals, the mountain wave is not a regular visitor to the skies above El Paso; but when it does appear, you *must* play hookie and give it a try! It will be an experience you will treasure for the rest of your life!

By: Chris Fleming

ATC Meeting, Continued

contact them on frequency 119.15, and tell them the direction you are going, and the altitude range that you expect to maintain. If you choose to fly in the higher risk areas to the east of ELP, ATC requests that you call them on 119.15, so that they can steer airliner traffic away from you. That sounds like a good idea to me!

If you have never contacted ATC on the radio, or are not comfortable using the radio, fly with a club flight instruc-

tor and practice speaking with ATC. Communicating with ATC is not only easy, it greatly improves safety! The controllers are waiting for your call!

In return for our cooperation, ATC has agreed to route airliner traffic away from Horizon Airport during our glider operations. Hopefully the days of having a 737 flying through the middle of a gaggle of gliders climbing in a thermal over the airport are behind us!

“Thanks to master Airframe & Powerplant Mechanics John Martin and Jim Culbertson, our towplane is now better than ever!”

Tow Plane Update

Thanks to master Airframe & Powerplant Mechanics John Martin and Jim Culbertson, our towplane is now better than ever! Together, they removed the engine from the towplane to replace the engine case which had suffered a hairline crack along the base of one of the cylinders. After removing



the engine and inspecting the case, John Martin determined that the crack was within an hour or two of causing a catastrophic engine failure! After replacing the case and reinstalling the

engine, something was preventing the engine from developing full power. Jim discovered a bulletin that said that with this particular engine, it is possible to install the camshaft in a way

that prevented the engine from developing full power. So John and Jim removed the engine—again! After removing and

reinstalling the camshaft, the engine is producing more power than ever before! Most glider tows are now only taking 0.1 or 0.2 hours! Be sure to thank John and Jim for their help!

President's Letter to the Membership

“The club is just a group of people who share a common interest, and are splitting the costs and work of running the club.”

As I began constructing my “To Do” list for improving our club, I asked many of the members what they would like to see different about the club in five years. I was expecting to hear things like: more new gliders or more new members; something physical. But what I kept hearing was “more member participation.” Wow. How do I, as Club President, get more members to participate?

One way to encourage member participation fits well with other plans that I have for the club, mainly improving the product. If the club has a good product, i.e.: gliders that are attractive and fun to fly, inexpensive and available in a friendly and comfortable environment: “They will come!” Also, having a good training program to teach members how to cut their umbilical cords and fly beyond the traffic pattern is a fantastic way of greatly increasing the fun factor of our sport, and a great way to encourage members to come out and fly.

But member participation goes beyond coming out to fly gliders. The club is a machine that requires time and effort from its members to run from week to week, and unfortunately only a few members currently do all of the work.

Joining the club and writing a check doesn't by itself entitle a member ac-

cess to club gliders, tows, and instruction. The club is just a group of people who share a common interest, and are splitting the costs and work of running the club.

If something is broken, who should fix it? You should! When we run out of supplies, who should replace them? You should! When a club improvement project is announced, who should volunteer their time to complete it? That's right! You should!

The club will always need volunteer flight instructors and tow pilots; right now both of these categories are at dangerously low staffing levels. We also need volunteers to maintain our equipment; the Schweizer 2-33's wheel brake hasn't worked in almost a year. The Eagle's Nest is being upgraded, the club's hangar is getting thoroughly cleaned, and we are embarking on a major P.R. campaign. All of these tasks need your participation.

This club needs everybody to participate, or it doesn't work. In just the last few months, a few motivated club members rolled up their sleeves, and now we have a new glider, a golf cart, an operating winch, an outdoor recreation area, a new cross-country training program, and an ever cleaner hangar! Imagine how cool our club would be in five years if everybody participated!

Flying When it is Windy, Part 2

“Competent glider pilots should *always* be able to put their glider exactly where they want it, every time they land!”

Last month I planted some thoughts for you to consider before climbing into the cockpit on a windy day, most importantly the severe risks of choosing to make a 180° turn back to the runway after a rope break. Landing with a strong tailwind in a glider is guaranteed to cause damage to the glider, and quite possibly injure you and your passenger.

Another area that requires your acute attention is how you will amend your landing technique to account for the strong headwind on final approach. A strong headwind will cause the performance of your glider to decrease. For example, a 20 knot headwind will decrease your maximum glide performance by almost 35% when flying at 60 knots airspeed ($60 - 20 = 40$; 40 is 34% less than 60). Normally we fly our final approach with our spoilers extended half-way. This will intentionally decrease our published maximum L/D by another 60%, or to about 9:1 in the Grob 103 and 102, or to about 5:1 in the Schweizer 2-33 and 1-26!

If you fly your traffic pattern without compensating for the wind, you will

be surprised by how steep your approach path on final will be, and you will close your spoilers completely to try to stretch your glide. This not only won't be enough to get you all the way to your desired stopping point, it also takes away your ability to recover from any additional problems; you don't have any more spoilers to close if you are landing short!

Again, we are blessed with a very long runway, and you are probably going to



be lucky with having asphalt under you when your wheel touches down. However, competent glider pilots should *always* be able to put

their glider exactly where they want it, every time they land! If you land short of your desired touchdown point, or if you stop prior to reaching your desired stopping point, you have risked the safety of your flight.

Learn from your mistakes, and correct them so they don't occur again. If you need to land off-airport someday, or if you fly at a club with a shorter runway, you will need to trust your ability to put your glider exactly where it needs to go, and stop it exactly where it needs to be stopped.

The Soaring Season is Already Here!

“One day [in the past month] had four gliders climbing in a gaggle directly above the airport, and another had a flight to almost 18,000 ft.!”

What are you waiting for?! If you are waiting for an abundance of strong thermals over 10,000 feet tall, then you’ve already missed some great days of soaring!

During the last month, we have had many flights over an hour long, with some more than two hours long, and one more than three hours long! The only thing bringing these gliders back down was the pilot choosing to do so!

These flights weren’t just scratching around in weak lift, either! One day had four gliders climbing in a gaggle directly above the airport, and another had a flight to almost 18,000 feet!

Cross-Country season? You bet! There have been several flights away from the airport, with one going as far as MacGuire’s Ranch—in March! So again I’ll ask you: What are you waiting for?!

Club News

The club’s size is growing! We have more students, more pilots, and more family members!

Dr. Todd Wichman worked tirelessly for the past few months, and all of his hard work has paid off! Last month he earned his Private Pilot’s Certificate after a great checkride in challenging weather conditions. Congratulations, Todd, on a job well done!

Maly and Keith Fong added one to their family this month: a boy they’ve named Kai Ming Joshua Fong, born Saturday, March 5. At birth he weighed 7 lbs, 6 oz and was 20 inches long. Both Maly and Kai Ming came through the delivery in pretty good shape. Their 2-year-old daughter, Mei Jing, has taken to her brother—at least for the moment! Congratulations, Maly and Keith!



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER
OF THE
EL PASO
SOARING SOCIETY

EL PASO, TEXAS

FLY GLIDERS WITH THE
EL PASO SOARING SOCIETY!
WE NORMALLY BEGIN
OPERATIONS AT NOON ON
WEEKENDS.

WE ARE LOCATED AT
HORIZON AIRPORT, WHICH IS
LOCATED 2.5 MILES NORTH OF
INTERSTATE 10 ON
JOE BATTLE BOULEVARD,
TURN EAST ON PELLICANO
DRIVE, AND GO 1 MILE, THEN
FOLLOW THE AIRPORT SIGNS.

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CALL US
FOR MORE INFORMATION!

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JAMES COX, TREASURER:
(915) 585-9135

JOHN HARDY, FAA EXAMINER:
(915) 852-7674

HORIZON AIRPORT:
(915) 852-3554

VISIT US ON THE WEB AT
ELPASOSOARING.ORG



EL PASO SOARING SOCIETY

INFORMATION ABOUT JOINING THE EL PASO SOARING SOCIETY

The El Paso Soaring Society is a non-profit sports organization dedicated to the pursuit of soaring flight. Membership participation in club activities allows all of us to enjoy the sport at a reasonable cost. We have four sailplanes available for member use, as well as our own tow plane. Flight instruction is available to all club members who desire to learn how to soar. Student pilots can solo gliders as young as 14 years old, and get their license by age 16; there is no maximum age limit. Generally, a student can solo after 30 instructional flights. Transition pilot training is also available.

Membership Costs:

Introductory Ride	\$50
Initiation Fee	\$250
Club Dues	\$40/mo.
SSA Dues	\$64/yr.
Typical Tow Charge	\$20
Glider Rental:	
SGS 2-33	\$10/hr.
SGS 1-26	\$10/hr.
Grob 103	\$15/hr.
Grob 102	\$15/hr.
Total cost to join	\$~395

Club Projects

Progress is contagious! As the club continues its transformation, club members are getting excited again about soaring! Several club-improvement projects have now been completed, others have had club members volunteer to complete them, but many more still need your help!

In addition to this list, you can create your own project to improve the club! Simply contact Chris Fleming with your ideas. If your project requires financial assistance, funding may be available with approval from the club's Board of Directors.

Eagle's Nest Overhaul:

Paint: Chris Fleming

Awning: T.J. Neely

Grob-102 Integration:

Upgrades: Keith Fong

Gear Warning: Hal Green

Schweizer 2-33 Repairs: Lou Braddi

Club Grob Trailer: *available*

Club Manuals: Chris Fleming

Club Website: *available*

Club Hangar Upkeep: *available*

Club Advertising: *available*