THE LEADING EDGE
Newsletter of the M.I.T. Soaring Association, Inc.

Editor: Shaun Keller

April 1994

New Phone Number for Recorded Message

Call **(508) 251-1374** instead of (508) 422-0272. (Both numbers were working on 4/7/94 – Editor)

Cross Country Class

by John Wren

The cross country class will be rescheduled for April 28th, 29th, and 30th. It will be held at Kodak and will start at 7pm on Thur/Fri and Sat will be left open.

This class is for any member hoping to try their first cross country fight this season. For more information call John Wren at 508-251-2878 or use e-mail 76467.3163@compuserve.com

Soaring Season Started

The snow has melted and the ground should be dry to permit 1994's first operation on April 9. The ground was still soft and muddy in spots on April 2, but the L23 returned from annual inspection and the 1-34 was sent for its annual. The 1-26 is at Sterling. A second tow plane will be available this season, two new Blaniks (L23 and L33) should arrive soon.

Spring Projects

by Derek Sherlock

1. Compound and wax the L-23.

   > I would like to get at least 6 people to work buffing and waxing it. – Guenther Eichhorn

2. Clean, vacuum, lube, strip and inspect the 1-34 in prep for annual. (Too late? – Editor)
3. Hoist the spare L-23 wings in Guenther's hangar.
4. Remove the spare L-23 instruments for dry storage or fitting to a new glider.
5. Take the parachutes to New Bedford for packing. (RW Shop? – Editor)
6. Plenty of office stuff needed since the roof leaked. (What a mess! – Editor)
7. One of the L-23 tiedowns needs redigging. It's not urgent, as we're an L-23 short.
8. Dig tiedown for L-33.
9. L-23 canopy rails need fixing (again).

   > I would suggest (using 400 wet dry paper on a wood block) and sanding the top and bottom of the windows. Not much, less than 1/100 of an inch. – Ira Blieden

10. Make new canopy cover for L-23.

11. Help with the mobile-office, clubhouse project. Don't know when it'll happen, though.

12. Golf carts to be inspected, but I don't think they'll need any work.

13. Blanik trailer wiring needs to be fixed. Doesn't have a MITSA connector and lights don't work right.

14. Make a "WARNING: Grass runway in use" sign (with strobe?) to post at the cross-taxiway during Citabria tow operations.

15. Much junk in the hangar needs to be tidied up and/or thrown out.

16. Towropes need to be replaced. Probably need to make some weak links too.

17. When the new gliders arrive there'll be a bunch of work too: We'll need a small and well organized uncrating and rigging crew. They should also be waxed almost immediately, as it provides protection and is much easier when they're new and clean.

Then, once you've done all that, my Pitts could use some polish too. `;->`

If you would like to tackle these, or any other needed tasks, please call the following people:

For glider and towplane maintenance:

Guenther Eichhorn 617-646-8750
gei@cfa.harvard.edu

For logistics, ground, office, towrope, golfcart type stuff:

Jakov Kucan 617-576-0735
kucan@theory.lcs.mit.edu

Mobile office, clubhouse:

John Wren 508-251-2878
76467.3163@compuserve.com

For polishing my Pitts...

I'll set the ball rolling by organizing and participating in a tie-down diggin' party when the ground is neither frozen nor too muddy. That should be pretty soon at the rate we're going. Gimme a call at:

Derek Sherlock 603-882-4857
72607.3126@compuserve.com

What's a 3B3?

by John Wren

By the time you get this newsletter the club may have already started it's 94 season. This year brings huge expectations, not only for the flights to come, but for the fact we will have expanded our fleet. As most of you know the new Blanik and L33 Solo will soon be here. This alone will increase operations by the fact the club has another glider to put into the air. Or put another way, members will be breaking their necks to get into the L33.

What you may not know is the club will be providing an extra tug at certain times of the year to help increase tow capacity. The new tow plane is being provided by several members who formed a syndicate early this year to purchase a plane for their personal use. They have also made the plane available for limited club use.

This letter will help you to understand how, when , and where this plane will be used. It is important that it be used correctly. If not used enough, members may become frustrated at not being able to get into the air in a timely manner. This can lead to decreased launches, members leaving the club or gliding and it will make recruitment difficult if others hear that we can not offer suitable towing.

On the other hand, if the plane is used too much, this will take away some revenue from the clubs tow plane. Also, the owners of this plane do not want to run their beautiful plane into the ground. In short, the plane is there to be used by the club, but used wisely.

Who's 3B3?

3B3 is a syndicate formed by Bill Brine, Derek Sherlock, Peter Foley, Ian Clark, John Wren, and Tom Avery. Most of you may not know Tom, but I'm sure you have seen him around, he is one of the owners of the airport. There is also talk of adding a few more names to the list.

This type of arrangement is not new to the club. Our 150 was owned by LarKen (Larry Ryan/Ken MacDowell) for many years and was only purchased, a little over a year ago, by the club.

3B3 from the beginning wanted to purchase a plane that not only would provided fun and exciting flying for it's members, but could also be used as a tow plane. We chose to buy a 150hp Citabria and this plane will clearly fit both requirements.

When Will It Be Used?

The Citabria will be made available during the clubs peak tow period, which is April through June. During this time the plane will be scheduled and a tow pilot provided between 11am and 3pm on weekends. If the day does not prove to be soarable or there does not seem to be the capacity to use two tow planes, the Citabria will not be brought out and will likely be used by 3B3 for their personal use.

During the rest of the season it will be used during peak periods if made available by 3B3. This means that if the plane is at the field and not being used by 3B3, it may be used if a 3B3 tow pilot is there to fly it. So we will all have to look ahead a day or so to see if any great soaring days are coming up.

The plane will also be used on a limited basis if the club's tow plane goes down for an extended period of time.

Who Will Fly It?

Several pilots in 3B3 are or will be checked out to tow in the Citabria. There will also be several MITSA pilots checked to fly "65Z".

How Will It Be Used?

On a scheduled day the Duty Officer of the day and the scheduled 3B3 tow pilot will judge if there is a need for the second tow plane. If so, the Citabria will be brought into service around 11am and used until approximately 3pm. This will be the time that most of the solo gliders and cross country pilots will want to get into the air.

For the moment, the best rule of thumb we will use in judging when the Citabria will be brought out is: *WHEN THERE ARE FIVE OR MORE GLIDERS BEING PREPARED TO FLY FOR THE DAY.*

Meaning, when there is any combination of either club gliders being brought out or private owner gliders being rigged its time to get the Citabria ready.

For the sake of efficiency there will now be two launch points. One on the main runway and one on the grass. The clubs 150 will always use the main runway, the Citabria will normally run off the grass. The actual details of how this will work will be explained in another article. At this time we have not finalized the operations for two tow planes. The Chief Tow Pilot and I have a fair idea as to how it should run, but I would like to try a few operations before committing the process to paper. For this reason you will see Lee Marzke, Derek Sherlock, or I at most operations over the next few weeks.

Banzai Beaver Contest

by John Wren

One of my main efforts, since coming to this club, has been to get everyone to think about cross country flying. Actually that's half the problem, everyone thinks about, but do very little about it. Except for a handful of hard core private owners, very little cross country flying is attempted by members of this club.

In attempt to get things rolling I first introduced the “Beaver Contest.” Loosely based on the British Gliding Associations “National Ladder” contest, it’s intent was to give incentive to pilots of all levels to fly cross country. Running throughout the soaring season it was a simple “contest” that anyone could enter. It had even been modified to accept non-cross country flights by those not qualified to do so, if flown over a prescribed closed course. In the end it died a natural death. If I didn’t chase people to enter few would send in flight decelerations and after the effort the same four or five pilots I knew were flying c/c were the only entrants.

Two years ago I started the “Memorial Day” cross country weekend. This was met with much more enthusiasm, but the weather has not cooperated. We’ve had more people sign up than we have gliders. Many have come out to the field just to give a helping hand and for the barbecue afterwards. If we ever get a good weekend this thing could be a huge success.

So this year I would like to restart the “Beaver Contest” and there is two ways you can help. One, I need everyone, that is solo, to participate. Two, I need several people to help run this thing (several members to act as score keepers and stewards). I am also looking into including other clubs in the area to participate in a inter-club contest.

A short list of the rules are as follows:

1. Contest will run from April 1st thru Oct 31st.
2. All flights must originate from Sterling.
3. There will be two classes
   - Open class - Open to any flight.
   - Club class - For flights made in club gliders only.
4. A pilot may enter as many flights as they wish, but only the best four will be used at end of the season.
5. Pilots word will be accepted on all start and finish times, but photos must be submitted of all turning points.
6. Flights must be detailed and submitted to a contest steward within 30 days after the flight.
7. All scores will be handicapped and based on time and distance.
   - All finished, declared flights will receive 100% of their score
   - Declared, incomplete flights 75% of score.
   - Undeclared flights 50% of score.
     (a B.B. strategy hint: Declare all flights!)
   - Trainers must carry two pilots and points will go to PIC.

More details will be give in the next newsletter.

WANTED

Crew for Nationals

I’m looking for a crew for the Nationals this year and a photo crew. The contest will be the last two weeks of June. – John Wren

Missing Floppy Drive

Several months ago Lee Marzke donated a 3-1/2 HD floppy drive for the club’s computer. Derek left it at the field with the computer while he searched for the correct plug to install it. When he returned, several weeks later, the drive was gone.

So, if you know where it is could you let me know or if we can not locate it is there anyone out there that can donate another HD floppy drive? – John Wren

For Sale

Sailplane

Slingsby Dart 17R half share. See info in Sterling office window. – Kerry Richards

Soaring Merchandise

MITSA has some nice stuff available from our Sterling office (pay the D.O.):

- bumper stickers *I'd rather be soaring* $1 each
- MITSA T-shirts (mostly M) $5 each
- US Soaring Team cloth patches $1 each
- 1983 (the latest!) Sailplane Directory (pictures and specs) $5 each
- soaring posters $5 each

Please Write!

by The New Editor

Some of you may remember when my better half (Cathy) edited the newsletter. Now that was a great newsletter! I have a bunch of ideas for the newsletter, but I wanted to get out the first issue quickly so it is high on info and low on fancy stuff. You are encouraged to contribute!

Two requests: 1. Please give me photos (prints) to publish. 2. I'd like you to make an effort to write a paragraph or two about recent flights. Where did you go? What was the weather? What were the decisions you made? Put it on a postcard or e-mail it to me. (32 Kenneth St. West Roxbury, MA 02132-2023 (617) 327-3193 keller@world.std.com)

Next Issue

1. 1993 MITSA Award Winners and how you can win this year
2. New sailplanes!

   ...by 4/25 – Bill Brine

3. MITSA goes international via computer networks—all about what's on-line. Tidbit for those on Internet (Thanks Guenther!):

`http://adswww.harvard.edu/MITSA/mitsa_homepg.html`

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