THE LEADING EDGE
The Newsletter of the M.I.T. Soaring Association, Inc.
December 1995

Acting Editor: Mark Tuttle

Contents

Ground School

Joe Kwasnik

John Wren has agreed to conduct a basic glider ground school to prepare students for the FAA written test. John is designing the school so that successful graduates will be able to receive John's sign-off and take the FAA written test soon after the end of the course.

This is the first organized ground school in a number of years and many members and non-members have expressed interest in attending. All are encouraged to attend and help make the school a success.

The course will be held on Saturday January 13th and Saturday January 20th at the New England Electric System headquarters in Westboro. The school will start at 9:00 am on each day and run until about 7:00pm.

A minimal fee will be collected from each student to cover the cost of materials for the course (overheads, photocopies, etc.). Each student will be required to purchase the following book for the course:

ASA Private Pilot Test Prep (ASA-TP-15B)
For FAA-T-8080-15B
$13 at Joe's Pilot Shop, Norwood Airport

In addition, each student should bring a calculator and plotter. Students will not need a E6-B or any other special flight calculators. Other books that students should have in their personal library are:

SSA Soaring Flight Manual
FAR/AIM
FAA ACOO-6A Aviation Weather
FAA ACOO-45C Aviation Weather Services

The New England Electric System (NEES) headquarters are located at 25 Research Drive in Westboro. From Route 495, take exit for Route 9 West. From Route 9 West, take first exit (less than 1 mile) to "Flanders Road." Turn left at stop sign, proceed to bottom of hill, turn left over Route 9, take next left onto Research Drive. Turn right into the NEES entrance, park and walk to the front entrance near flag pole. Sign in with the security guard who will direct you to the class room.

Thank you, John, for agreeing to dedicate your time and effort to educating us. Questions regarding the class should be directed to Joe Kwasnik at (508) 366-0474 or kwasni@neesnet.com.

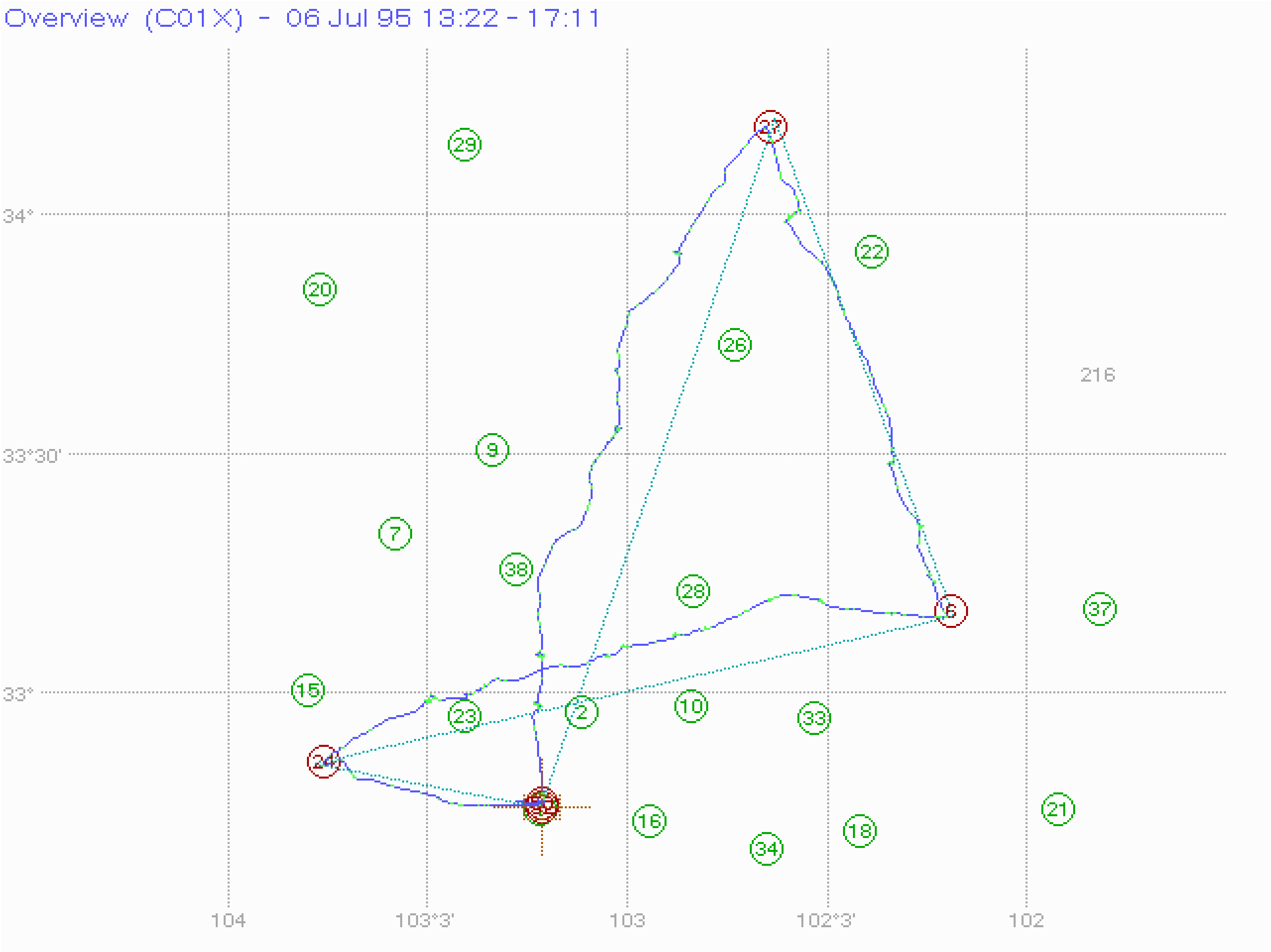
News Briefs

Mark Tuttle

New Members: Please welcome some new members who have joined since the last newsletter: Paul Overy, Charles Robertson, Walter Sakowicz, and James Wyner. Paul and James are new to gliding. Charles is a licensed power pilot who wrote to me via email to say that he is "eagerly reading everything I can get my hands on regarding soaring." Walter is a licensed glider and power pilot (including instruments) who flew gliders at Salem, NH, until the field was turned into a golf course (a waste of perfectly good real estate, in my opinion). Walter's schedule makes flying during the week most attractive, so pilots trying to organize a pick-up operation mid-week should keep Walter in mind. We are happy to welcome all four to MITSA!

Competition: The latest issue of *Soaring* magazine includes an article about the Region 4 competition, and says that club member Phil Gaisford placed fourth in the Standard Class. Congratulations, Phil!

Boy Scout aviation merit badge: During the weekend of December 15/16 — weather permitting — MITSA will be helping a group of Boy Scouts earn their aviation merit badges. John Wren will lead a ground school Friday evening to teach the basics of safety and aerodynamics, and demo pilots will give demo rides to the scouts on Saturday and Sunday. Contact Mark Tuttle for information.



Turnpoints: 2 - Abondoned 23 - Lovington 38 - Tatum 26 - Morton 27 - Muleshoe
22 - Littlefield 216 - Lubbock 6 - Brownfield 10 - Denver City 24 - Maljamar

Figure 1: Bob Fletcher's flight course at the 15m National Championships.

A Quick 500km before We Leave

Bob Fletcher

Competitive glider pilots are singularly focused — well almost. July 6th dawned clear and bright in Hobbs, NM. It was the last day of the 15m National Championships. Fred Ernsting, my top notch crew, and I rigged the glider, attended briefing and positioned it on the grid.

During the thirty minutes prior to launch I called my wife Michelle. I was flying the ASW-24 in the 15m competition because our first born was scheduled for Day 2 of the Standard Class (a good move as the weather turned out). This latest update reaffirmed that junior was going to be much earlier than expected but not early enough to leave immediately, not late enough to attend the awards banquet, just sufficient time for a quick 500km.

The terrain at Hobbs lays between 3700' and 4700' MSL, varying from sand dunes, to outback, to oil fields, to cotton fields. Today's task takes us south into sand dune country. As we launch, the cumulus clouds are developing vertically, indicating a strong possibility of afternoon storms. Before the fleet has left the ground a cell over Wink results in a new task being declared: Hobbs, Muleshoe, Brownfield, Maljamar, Hobbs. The new task area to the north looks less likely to blow-up so I start at about 1:24.

After a high energy start, I head for some good looking clouds north of the course (see Figures 1 and 2). Twelve nautical miles out I contact the important first climb, 7kts. Another 5 miles and I core another strong one which takes me up to cloud base. Life is getting good and I fly along a string of loosely connected streets for the next 42 nautical miles. As the sky is drying out, I head for a great looking cloud over a dry lake near Needmore. I center under one of the early starters and settle into 8kts. Within 2 minutes a gaggle including Karl Striedieck, Bill Bartell, and Roy McMaster pulls in 100' below. From 13,000' we head for the turn at about 90-100kts. The flaps are a real advantage at this speed.

Figure 2: Bob Fletcher's flight profile at the 15m National Championships.

The twenty miles into and back out of Muleshoe zip by. The faster members of the gaggle, Karl and Bill, have now found a core at around 3000'AGL. We all join together again and climb at about 8kts. The flapped guys all leave at 110kts and I say my farewell. I'm gliding at about 95kts and bouncing clouds. After 20 minutes I take a climb near Reese AFB. The clouds now seem to only offer 6kts without the ability to easily reach cloud base. I keep pecking at various clouds, round the Brownfield turn, and keep running hoping for something better.

In the next series of climbs I meet the fast pack again. To my surprise I'm higher! The leg to Maljamar is one continuous hunt for a fast climb to get up close to a final glide. In Texas it's often possible to start the final glide 2000-3000' under the required height and bounce the required energy out of the remaining cores, but not on this day.

Finally, the group all join together in a 3-4kt thermal over Lovington. We grind this round until close to cloud base and head out for Maljamar. The terrain from here all the way home is mesquite with few dirt roads and no airports. Just short of the turn I find another 4kt core, take 1000', and start a 300' margin final glide. There are a few 4-5kt bumps on the way home which gives the heavy sleds an advantage. I finish 5 minutes after Bill and Karl, 81 mph giving 15th for the day and the fastest standard class driver. This is why we drive to Texas.

Fred whipped through the derigging chores and we were ready to start the 48-hour drive home. We left Hobbs at 6:00pm on Thursday and arrived home in Boston at 3:30pm Saturday. Alas, Fred was deprived of his Sunday Dim Sum in China Town because Michelle went into labor at midnight, giving birth to 8lbs 10oz Ryan at 9:00pm.

See the Cambridge Aero Instruments home page at http://acro.harvard.edu/SSA/WORLD_95/cai.html for information on the software used to plot the GPS data from by Bob's flight computer in Figures 1 and 2. —Ed.

MITSA Dim Sum

Bob Fletcher

Anyone interested in trying Dim Sum in China Town one Sunday morning, with a guide to explain the fare, e-mail me at camgps@usa1.com.

Think about the Tow Pilot

Ken Kochanski

The following article was posted to the Usenet's soaring newsgroup rec.aviation.soaring by Ken Kochanski (kkochans@ix.netcom.com) of Brandywine Soaring Association (New Garden Airport, DE). Ken was a member of Aero Club Albatross (Blairstown Airport, NJ) at the time of the accident described here. This article caught my eye since we are instructed on the danger we would pose to a tow pilot by getting too high during the initial climb, but I'd never thought in such detail about the danger I could pose to a tow pilot at higher altitudes. —Ed.

In January 1989, I and other club members watched one of our pilots die in an accident towing a 1-26. The midwinter weekend day was wonderfully warm (mid 60's) and the airport was packed with tourists and club members. The 1-26 was a little wild as it lifted off the ground, but the pilot regained enough control to start the climb out. At 200-300 feet it was apparent to the observers that the glider pilot was having problems. The tow pilot was apparently also aware of the problem, because he turned back over the field…we assume to get the glider over the airport so it could release and land safely. However, the glider hung on and the L-19 again traveled the length of the airport and began a turn with glider in tow. As we watched, the L-19 just snap-rolled and accelerated into the ground. We'll never really know what happened, but many observers think the 1-26 was high and off to the side…and if so, then the tow pilot probably had the stick back in his lap, and was probably standing on the rudder. This, of course, is the perfect setup for a snap-roll, and that's exactly what happened when the rope released. Nobody actually knows who released…or saw the rope release…it landed close to the back of the L-19, but was not actually attached. I read parts of the NTSB report and it put blame on both pilots. Blame won't bring our friends back…or prevent this from happening again.

This is not happy stuff, and I was inclined to cancel this post, but I knew the tow pilot well, I talk to his mom and dad now and then, and I hope this account just highlights (again) the life and death power that the glider pilot has over the tow pilot.

Club Class in Future Competition

Duff Davis

The following informal message was posted to rec.aviation.soaring by Duff Davis (davism@aa.wl.com) of the Sandhill Soaring Club (Gregory, MI). Contact the SSA if you want to confirm any of these points. —Ed.

Although unofficial at this point, word has it that when the Sailplane Racing Association and SSA Contest Board met in Texas a couple weeks ago, they approved an extension of the Club Class category within the Sports Class Division. They also lowered the handicap significantly from CH 1.32 to CH 1.2 to include many higher performance wooden ships originally excluded (eg, Ka6cr, Ka6e, some Austrias, 1-23, Pilatus B4, etc.). This would hopefully increase the number of participants this coming year at the regional level.

Several of you had been concerned that there was too wide a gap between those ships in the original Club Class group and those ships competitive in Sports Class. Now that gap has closed a bit. We suggest you contact your local contest director and encourage him/her to support the Club Class this coming year. Last year at Region 6 here in Michigan several pilots flew a Ka8 and had a ball! It was the lowest performance glider that had flown in that regional for years, and it didn't come in last.

In the course of an email conversation, Duff mentioned other decisions he'd heard were made at the meeting: a single-place glider can now be team piloted by two people, contest numbers (unless already assigned) will cost a nominal fee and can be reserved or wait-listed, and ELTs will be mandatory for competition in 1997 (optional in 1996). He also provided me with an incomplete list of popular gliders having a handicap of CH 1.2 or greater: Ka-6, Ka-6e, Ka-7, Ka-8, and Ka-13; Schweizer 1-23 (all), 1-26, 2-22, and 2-33; Pilatus B-4; Scheibe L-Spatz; Blanik L-23, L-13 (and L-33?); Bergefalke II, III; Duster; Monerei (all); Austria (most); and most lower-performing motorgliders. —Ed.

Phony Phonetic Alphabets

Rich Wilson

The following was posted to the Usenet's joke newsgroup rec.humor.funny by Rich Wilson (rwilson@amsa.com). —Ed.

The standard phonetic alphabet has been used for many years now. I finally decided to come up with something a bit more "original" for those people who annoy me.

A	Are	N	Nine
B	Bee	O	Owe
C	Cite	P	Pseudonym
D	Double-U	Q	Queue
E	Eye	R	Rap
F	Five	S	Sea
G	Genre	T	Tsunami
H	Hoe	U	Understand?
I	I	V	Vie
J	Junta	W	Why
K	Knot	X	Xylophone
L	Lye	Y	You
M	Me	Z	Zero

People don't ask me to spell anything over the phone anymore.