

The 2010 WSPA Seminar, Air Sailing, Nevada

by Frauke Elber

The 2010 seminar returned to WSPA's place of conception. It was here in 1985 that the idea sprang up to form a Women's Soaring Pilot Association. (Who are the people in the picture?) The legal move was concluded a year later at the Tucson seminar, when WSPA was incorporated.

This year's seminar was the second biggest ever (Black Forest in 1993 had over 70 registered participants). Withwith all the helpers from the hosting club and outside the total number of people spending the week at the airport easily was over 70. 44of the registrants were active pilots, 14 of these students. Charlotte Taylor, Carol Mulder, Julie Butler brought their single- seat gliders with Charlotte having the honor of trailering her plane the furthest, Neva Cole bringing her double seater from Oregon. Laurie Harden provided two gliders (and instructors) from her commercial operation. 16 sailplanes were available for instruction or a taste of high performance soaring. WSPA's own instructors were: Neita and Mark Montague (with Neita getting the honor of the most instruction flights beside all her organizational duties and having gotten her Instructor rating just a week before the seminar), Monique Weil and Mary Rust. Our participants came from Germany, Slovenia, Canada (Alberta) and US (CT, NY, VA, FL, AL, OH, KS, MI, MO, NM ,AZ, NV, CA,OR). Some came on the shortest and direct way by plane or car. Others took more adventures means of transportation. Colleen Koenig and Mark Hawkins took a 9000 ml detour through Alaska on their motor bikes, Ulrike Franz used the trains from Alabama to Reno detouring through San Francisco and San Diego. Frauke and Wolf Elber took 4 weeks driving their motor home across the country and visiting many sites on the way. Lucy Anne McKosky and her husband Mike did their first cross country trip in their newly acquired motor home. But the most frustrating and adventures trip goes to our Slovenians thanks to airline screw ups. (I hope one of them will tell their story).

Several participants had arrived by the middle of the week preceding the seminar to give Neita a helping hand. -Special thanks to Charlotte Taylor and husband Roy, to Mary Rust and Dale Roberts and his wife Kate who were the advanced party.- Neita had organized accommodations for many in camping trailers stationed at Air Sailing, some stayed in her house (while she and Mark stayed at the airport), a few had to do the daily commute to a motel.

Throughout the week the operation was tightly scheduled to maximize utilization of planes and instructors. First flights usually took off about 8:15 AM and some days the last planes did not land until 7:30 PM. Seminar participants were scheduled for operational duties and were in charge to prepare breakfast, lunch and dinner and the clean-up afterwards. Never mind if you were a bona fide participant or accompanying husband, significant other or parents, you were scheduled to work –the military would have envied that operation. Neita had the food planned for every day and all food items were at the airport labeled for

every days use. Considering the nearest grocery store was over 30 miles away and feeding three meals to about 70 people made this alone a monumental task. One unsung hero was Terry Duncan who was glued to the computer doing registrations and the bookkeeping.

Before the official beginning of the seminar two excursions were planned for the early arrivals: a visit to Virginia City, an old Silver and Gold mining town that has shrunk from 25000 inhabitants in its hay days to about 1800 now (and many tourists). A special treat was the guided tour through the town's famous cemetery by costumed actors who brought some illustrious townspeople of the past to life again. Lunch was in a Chinese restaurant the owners being descendants of Chinese who were part the town's history. Marye Anne Read and Terry Duncan lead this excursion. The other excursion went to Pyramide Lake just to the north of Air Sailing. A refreshing dip into the slightly alkaline water was a most welcome break from the desert heat. A planned visit to the nearby Paiute tribe museum was nixed because the museum is closed on Sundays. During these pre-seminar days as many as possible check-outs were conducted but this continued until Tuesday, which on Monday led to a record day for Air Sailing : 68 tows. The unsung heroes of that day were the tow pilots and instructors.

Monday was a bit chaotic but by Tuesday the seminar had turned into a well greased operation, everybody doing their part as scheduled. Flying started at 8:00 AM. Students were scheduled in two tracks: the first flying while the second one had ground school. Later in the day that was reversed. The two Duos and the DG 1000 were not used for instruction but for two participants/day to experience advanced soaring in a high performance plane. Young Kate Redick, who just prior to the seminar had soloed in a 2-33 had an almost 5 hour and over 400 km flight with Morgan Hall in his DUO. Mike Green in his DUO and Matt Gillis and Ed Lord in the DG 1000 provided equal excitement for several seminar participants. This plane with Ed Lord in the back seat and Jana Jerman in the front went on a successful mission to Minden to retrieve the PASCO egg, that was snatched away from Air Sailing the week before by Laurie Harden from SOARINGNV. Our solo flyers were awed by the thermals and altitudes they reached, Charlotte in her ASW19 thinking her vario got stuck. She had never experienced at her home port in Illinois thermals that strong nor such altitudes. Monday evening after dinner participants engaged in a game of Yankee Trader and it became a lively and fun evening.

Wednesday evening Frauke Elber showed a slide show from last year's seminar in Slovenia. Thursday evening Gavin Wills, famed instructor from Omarama, NZ ,who presently is spending time in Minden and had flown in with Johann Posch in a DUO talked about soaring in the mountains of new Zealand and the following morning he and Johann analyzed their flight from Minden to Air Sailing using the SeeYou display and analyzing program. (Both departed in the earlier part of Friday to return to Minden , Morgan Hall and Julie Butler joining them in Morgan's DUO, which netted them an over 700km flight (see OLC).

Thursday's and Friday's flight operation included practice off-field landings at Flannigan Dry Lake, 35 miles away. 8 seminar participants had the opportunity to plan and execute an off-field landing with instructors in the back seat..

Friday evening concluded this most thoroughly planned and conducted seminar with the traditional banquet, during which prizes were awarded, the Limerick contest took place (15 Limericks were entered) and the drawing for the quilt was held. Winner of the Limerick contest was Laurie Harden and the quilt went to WSPA member Jim Wallis from David, CA (it was hand-delivered by Terry Duncan on her way home to the Bay area). As the 289 flights (towed with two tow ships) at the end of the seminar prove, this was a flying seminar, well organized and structured, which reminded me of soaring camps I attended in my early flying years in Germany.

The following are the 2010 scholarship winners:

Mid Kolstad scholarship \$1500	Elizabeth Collins
Maria Faber scholarship \$ 500	Elizabeth Tattersall
Sky Ghost scholarship \$ 500	Pyper Ribble
Flying Montagues scholarship \$ 500	Carol Mulder
Briegleb scholarship \$ 500	Leah Condon
Competition scholarship no applicants	

scholarships for this seminar only

Billy Goat Scholarship \$ 500	Summer Gajewski
Billy Goat Scholarship \$ 500	Kate Redick
Cliff Robertson Scholarship \$ 500	Phyllis Wells

Except for Elizabeth Collins and Pyper Ribble all recipients were present at the seminar.

The winning Limerick

**At Air Sailing dusty and dry,
Gathered dozens of women to fly,
Ground school and rope breaks
Land outs on dry lakes
Spirits soared as they took to the sky**

Laurie Harden