

2007 Seminar Report

By Neita Montague (and others)

Wish you had been here with us in Avenal, CA at the 29th Annual Women's Soaring Seminar. Weather was in the nineties, sunny and blue and the soaring was fun!

19 women and 5 men attended full time. Bertha Ryan and Arleen Coleson stopped by for a few hours and Anna Gunn-Golkin and Cindy Brickner spent a few days with the group. We had a record number of husbands as crew: five! Participants arrived by air (commercial and private planes), by car with sailplane in tow and by motor home (Frauke and Wolf drove across the country from Virginia, Andy, John and Michael Simpkins from Arizona).

Several participants made use of the cheap accommodations at the dorms of the Western Hills Community College in Coalinga (sadly, the State prison, just at the south end of the airport nor the State prison in Coalinga had rooms available). Neita had a rental house which became home for several participants. A few stayed in area motels and in their motor homes.

Kathy Taylor and husband, George trailered their ASW-27 from Moriarity, New Mexico. Charlotte Taylor and husband, Roy trailered her ASW-19 from St.Louis, Missouri. Connie Buenafe, also from Moriarity, brought her lovely Salto.

A nice variety of planes were available for students and who ever wanted to go up in a double seater: two Grob-103s, (Mary Rust and her husband Michael brought one from Mary's club), Monique had one trailered in from the Bay area. Mark Montague brought an ASK-21 and Michael Green his Duo Discus. CCSC had two 2-33s and a Blanik available.

All activities and socials took place on the shade spending porch of the CCSC clubhouse, which had gone through a major clean-up for the occasion. Even a shower and an extra toilet were installed (and probably being enjoyed by all the present and future members). All meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) were provided by the local caterer Mary Landers.

Dan Gudgel introduced the group to local weather and even send a daily weather forecast while at the Hilton Ranch (wondering if he spread the word about WSPA at the Ranch). Neita talked on the very important issue of hydration and in-flight relief. (A big package of DEPENDS © were available through out the seminar). Dave Cunninham lectured on Badges and Records. Dale masters, SSA master instructor, spoke on cross country flying and common pilot errors. Dale donated a box full of his book "SOARING beyond the Basics". THANK YOU Dale.

Dan Johnson (WSPA member) and his wife Isabel flew in from Wisconsin and Dan presented a lecture on "Physiology". Alan Silver gave a lively presentation on does and don'ts in emergency parachuting and care of this life saving device.

The evening programs were informal. Cindy Brickner, WSPA member from Caracole Soaring, gave a fascinating talk on landing out using her SSTOP mnemonic: Size, Slope, Texture, Obstacles and the Positive Points about the field. She had taken pictures over the San Joaquin Valley and over landing strips on her way into Avenal from California City so that we could discuss the good and bad points of local landing sites. There were also pictures of four actual landouts from overhead so we could discuss the good and bad aspects of the decisions made by the pilots. In addition to her lecture, she took several people up in her Citabria to view the area from the sky to put into practice what they had just learned in her lecture. (For Wolf Elber and Cindy it was a reunion after 24 years. Both had worked at the Worlds in Hobbs 1983).

Frauke Elber spoke one evening about the History of the International Women Competition, a timely topic since a week later the 4th Women World Championships began in France). At the end of the presentation Frauke showed pictures of the 3rd Women World Championships 2 years ago in Germany, which she had attended as the official interpreter.

Paul Hanson, who was in charge –beside many other things- for the audio-visual set-up showed the film classic “The Sunship Game” and several old film clips from the 30ies..

Tuesday was the only afternoon where we had blowy conditions that made flying challenging. The ones who did not fly were happy to chat in the clubhouse and under the awning until late afternoon when a bunch of us went swimming.

On Thursday night of the WSPA Seminar Monique Weil (79) was honored for her generous contribution to soaring and her years of enabling and encouraging women (and men) to fly. Monique has been an inspiration to so many over the years and she never leaves an opportunity to give of herself and her time to the WSPA.

We surprised Monique with a brief series of little stories about her and then gave her a plaque from all of the participants: The plaque reads: Frauke Elber and Joy Pierce were invited to the local community college to give a presentation to visiting high school students on the sport of soaring through the eyes of an experienced pilot and a new solo student.

The annual meeting and award dinner were held on Friday evening in the backyard of the co-chair's rental house. Lucy Anne McKosky, WSPA President presided over the WSPA Annual Meeting. Several prizes were awarded toP

Best dressed man: Mike Green ,AKA Mighty Gorilla, (Most improved wardrobe)

Best documentary production: Frauke Elber

Most enthusiastic participant: Joy Pierce

Most instructional flights: Mark Montague

Most student progress: Marissa Anaya and Amy Guyton

Outstanding CCSC volunteer: Paul Hanson

Spirit of WSPA Award: Andy Simpkins

Mike Green gave a dramatic reading of the limericks. Lucy Anne's limerick got the most votes. Neva Cole won the raffle for the hand-made ceramic plate.

Mike Green of Air Sailing donated proceeds of his rides in his Duo Discus to the WSPA and Monique donated her instruction. Thank you to both!

In planning the 2007 Seminar we came up with several new ideas: contacting the local college/university for the use of their dorm rooms for our participants and calling the local high school for use of their pool for dunking and lap swimming. The dorm rooms were \$15 a night and we used 6 of the available rooms while others either camped on the field or rented motel rooms. I rented the house of a college professor who was on vacation to Italy and we had Mark and me, four participants and one lecturer stay at this house which gave us laundry facilities, a kitchen and proved much less expensive than motels in the end.

I also contacted the local police and fire departments, the Mayor's office and local doctors. The fire department provided us with as much ice as we needed during the week. Through the Mayor's Office we were able to get bags of pistachios and almonds from Paramount Farms, one of the largest local producers of nuts. They also cold-packed and sent from Los Angeles those wonderful tall glasses of POM fruit teas which was a treat late on a hot Wednesday afternoon.

We developed a WSPA tow card stamp to enhance safety, bookkeeping and smooth operations.

Our special thanks go to the Central California Soaring Club and the volunteers who spent the week with us: Roy Norman, President, Richard Walker who built us a brand new bathroom with shower and toilet, Dennis Mast, John Renfro our Retrieve Officer, who never saw any action, Paul Hanson who was master of all trades. Don VanWyck was the accountant/treasurer for the week. I thank my Co-Chair, Kathleen Morse of the CCSC for taking care of with the meal planning/caterer, lectures, tshirts and registration. Thanks to our tow pilots, Loyal Savaria and Kurt Colvin. Star participant was Isaac, the Raven, who attended many lectures and got his A-badge during the seminar.