



February, 2002

Hangar Soaring

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE WOMEN SOARING PILOTS ASSOC.

www.womensoaring.org

IN THIS ISSUE

Page 2
Badge Lady
From the Editor
Update Olga Klepikova

Page 3
Scholarship Winners
Cockpit Calamity by Neita
Montague

Page 4&5
Hanna Reisch, Testing of Dive
Breaks, last Record Flight,
Achievements

Page 6
more WSPA news
Invitation from Germany
Convention 2002

Page 7
WSPA Scholarship Application
Form

Page 8
Seminar Announcement

BRSS Cross Country and
Contest Camp, New Castle, VA

Hanna Reitsch

March 29, 1912 – August 24, 1979



Hanna Reitsch, 1959

EULOGY 1979

With Hanna Reitsch ended an era in aerospports and aeronautical history. We are losing a great woman pilot – maybe the greatest ever- but also an exceptional ambassador of flying traditions all over the world, an untiring fighter for the idea of flying. And many of us mourn a good friend.

German Aeroclub, Gliding Commission
George Bruetting, President
Fred Weinholtz, Chairman of the Board

From German Documents 1/1980, Robert H. Drechsler ed. : Hanna Reitsch, Ikarus' Deutsche Schwester (Ikarus German Sister)

THE WOMEN SOARING PILOTS ASSOCIATION (WSPA) WAS FOUNDED IN 1986 AND IS AFFILIATED WITH THE SOARING SOCIETY OF AMERICA

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www.womensoaring.org

From the Badge Lady Aleen Coleson

BADGES FOR SOARING
Earned or recorded in the United States through Dec.2001

DIAMOND BADGES INTERNATIONAL NUMBERS
6584. Deborah B. Kutch (U. S. 905)

SILVER BADGES
6278. Erica M. Anderson

DURATION: 5 HOURS
(Fulfills Gold Duration Requirement)
Erica M. Anderson; SGS 1-34; Harris Hill, NY

ALTITUDE AND DISTANCE:
Erica M. Anderson; SGS 1-34 Harris Hill, NY

SSA B BADGES
Lorraine (Lorrie) French;
Gregory, MI

SSA A BADGES
*Karen M. Garner
Carolyn Blankenbaker
Ellen M. Neier
Kathy Ondrus
Ruthann K. Povinelli
Rose C. Travers

From the editor

With this issue of Hangar Soaring I'm finishing my first year as its editor –and survived. I was quite hesitant to take over from Chris, who did such a great job. Although I have been now editing our club's newsletter FLYPAPER for 21 years, I wasn't sure if I was ready to tackle a newsletter read across the nation, especially since I shied away from writing in English until the advent of word processors and – what a lifesaver- the spell check.

After my first issue of Hangar Soaring, it was brought to my attention, that the word "LADY" wasn't politically correct anymore, that the modern females wanted to be referred to as WOMEN. It then entered my mind, that I always knew I was a woman but that once in a while I liked to be called a "Lady" and not only when I walked through the door designated as such. But I made any effort not to call the women ladies anymore. Forgive me when once in a while a slip of the tongue happens.

It has been fun putting Hangar Soaring together; I made a lot of contacts, here at home and abroad. I couldn't believe my good luck when I found Olga Klepikova. Just recently I received her mailing address. I got in contact with women world record holders, Lilienthal and Majewska medal recipients, Hall of Fame members and other great women pilots and my archival files are growing. But sadly, I had more luck and cooperation overseas than here at home.

Being cost conscious I would appreciate it if you would let me know when you move or change names. With every mailing I get a handful of newsletters back. It costs \$1.30 to produce and mail a newsletter within the US, (\$5.20 of your \$10 membership fee cover your annual cost of Hangar Soaring), never mind the countless hours of editing the material, fitting it into the given format and physically putting Hangar Soaring together and getting it ready for mailing.

My special thanks go to Bertha Ryan who frequently checks and corrects my stories about great women soaring pilots and freely passes on her vast knowledge of times gone by.

Last but not least, it's very gratifying to see that we, the WSPA members, finally got an interesting discussion via our mail system wspa@womensoaring.org going. I would like to encourage those members who in the early time of the group address asked to be taken off the mailing list because they didn't understand the system, to give it a second try and to participate in the conversations. Also, please send me your soaring stories, short bios and news. It's YOU who make Hangar Soaring lively; I just put it all together.

Frauke

An unnamed WSPA member will give up to \$100 anonymously to pay WSPA membership dues for anyone out of work. Please contact Hangar Soaring (two members are already benefitting from that generous offer)

Follow-up on Olga Klepikova

Here is a follow-up on the Olga article in the November Hangar Soaring. Irmgard Morgner, who sent me the original letter, wrote the following, after I had sent her a SOARING copy with the Olga article. Here is what she wrote:

"We translated the SOARING article and it reached Olga via the young Ukrainian pilot Valja Toporova, twice European Women Champion, who like Olga also lives in Kiev. Valja reports: "Olga was pleased to learn that people know about her record. She is doing well (Ed. She turned 86 in November) but couldn't come to the end-of the season party because she had a cold."

Irmgard continued: "Her living conditions are not the best. Her pension is very small -just over

\$20/month but there is a chance that, as a war veteran, she will get a small supplement. All I know is that she is not happy about her pension. One of her daughters is working in the USA and visits her seldom. The other daughter lives under the same bad conditions as most of the people (former Soviet Union). Thank you that you keep the memories of soaring alive" Irmgard

Here is Olga's mailing address:
Olga Klepikova
ul. Kotelnikowa 25 kw.171
Vasiljena (Kiew) 03115
Ukraine

SKY GHOST SCHOLARSHIP



Kate Flynn in the Grob 103 which she flies in the Lake Tahoe area.

In July, 2001, **Kate Flynn** was awarded the Sky Ghost Scholarship. \$500.00 was sent to Soar Minden to be used by Kate to continue her lessons and obtain her private pilot license. In a recent letter from Kate she reports that she has now graduated from the University of Nevada, has obtained her private license and is working on her commercial glider rating. Kate is very motivated and determined to meet her

goal of becoming a bush pilot in Alaska. The next step toward that goal will be a single engine rating with lots of practice in tail draggers.

Kate will surely be an asset to the soaring community as she works through these ratings. It is inspiring to see young people so enthused about flying.

This year WSPA has three \$500 scholarships to award. Two are for the Women ' s Soaring Seminar and one can be used at any FBO. An application form is enclosed in this newsletter

Submitted by Phyllis Wells, Scholarship Chairperson, WSPA

BULTMAN AWARD (\$400). Application Deadline: April 30. For details see www.soarcsa.org/ssa/ssay/byfs.htm

The 2001 winner of this award was WSPA member **Sylvia Szafarczyk**.

Here is Sylvia's letter to the editor (SOARING, Dec.2001)



" I am thrilled that I have received the Bultman Award. When I first became involved with the Soaring Club of Houston, I never imagined that soaring would become such an integral part of my life. The soaring community and the members at SCOH have become like family; they are my teachers, my motivators, my

friends, my mentors and my heroes. I can't say enough about this sport that pulls me out on weekends to a quiet gliderport outside of

(Continued on page 6)

Cockpit Calamity

By Neita Montague

I climbed into my Ka6, spending some time familiarizing myself with the cockpit since I had not flown gliders for nearly a year. An enormous dust devil at AirSailing the previous summer had loosened the lower hinge of the tail-feathers of my Ka6CR. Since the glider had to be restored, we had a new canopy blown by Ray Poquette. I noted again that the tow release was below the transponder on its rather limp cable and now out of sight because I am very short, under 5' tall. I thought that might be a problem so a red string was tied to the transponder to hold the tow release handle and to help remind me where it was.

I had gone up in the club 2-33 that day with a CFI-G for four flights with two rope breaks. I took the 2-33 for a short solo and then climbed into the Ka6. After my look around the cockpit, I took off with the usual first-of-the-year-flight butterflies. It was the normal direct-crosswind take-off with high turbulence on the tow. We made a left 270 off the end of the runway then headed towards Dogskin, our local ridge. The wind was from the west and the turbulence got greater as it spilled over this ridge. Uncomfortable with my position and under the more-than-usual stress of tow, I released and started a right-hand turn. I looked to my left to check for the towplane and saw it slightly below me with the tow rope still attached. I reached up and pulled again and all of a sudden couldn't see. In a matter of seconds several things happened: I thought the glider had failed so I released my seatbelt. I started to push myself up when I glanced at the air speed indicator. I was at 70 knots and the plane was still flying, so I eased myself back down into the seat. I glanced left and all I saw was a blur: the towplane, still attached. I pulled the tow release hard, twice, then looked to my right and saw a fuzzy brown triangle at my 5 o'clock.

The canopy had departed, taking with it my glasses and my beloved AirSailing hat. At 1,500 feet AGL and with only one chance to land, I pulled spoilers and made a left 270 lining up on a dogleg to runway 03. I made a severe slip and the best landing of my life, stopping just beyond my usual spot on the runway. My husband watched the release but hadn't known what happened until he saw my long hair streaming behind my head in the landing roll.

In retrospect I realize several things, the most important being muscle memory. The tow release for the 2-33 and the Ka6 canopy release are in the same positions forward and just under the canopy, center. I had just practiced five tow releases in the 2-33 using that position. We should have found another place to put the enormously long transponder, but weighing the dangers of mid-air collision with commercial traffic into Reno and the inconvenience of the placement of the tow release below the transponder, it was a toss-up. We should have found another solution. Too bad that smaller transponder which has "been in production" for years and years and (talking to those in the know) is still far from being on the market, wasn't available.

Terry Duncan, a while later, offered her Libelle to my husband and as we were looking at it offered me to take a ride in it. I'd never flown single seat glass. It was wonderful. I'll always be grateful for her helping me "get back on the horse" and to Pam and Lori Brand for their support. I am now the proud owner of a Libelle. And so is my husband! I now practice moving my hand from the trim to the tow release to the spoiler handle many times prior to take-off and from trim to tow release during the take-off roll. Karol Hines gave me a thingy to hold my glasses on and I wear it whenever I am flying. And I also carry a spare pair of glasses in my fanny pack clipped to my parachute and within easy reach while in the cockpit.

A lot has been written about Hanna Reitsch's unusual flying career. Whenever her name is mentioned emotions seem to run high. But whatever reasons, nobody can deny the achievements of this woman pilot. In the following stories Hangar Soaring introduces Hanna Reitsch, the glider pilot.

In 1934 Hanna Reitsch joined the German Research Institute for Motorless Flight (DFS). In 1936 she became the test pilot for experiments with terminal velocity brakes (dive brakes) on sailplanes. The purpose of these tests was to limit the speed of a sailplane in a vertical dive and prevent it from breaking up in mid-air by deploying brakes that would keep it at max safe speed. Up to then sailplanes were only equipped with spoilers. She writes about that program:

Divebreak Tests

"I see in the airplane an unknown enemy whose behavior and tricks I don't know yet. (Ed note: a Sperber and a Kranich 2 were used.) I keep an eye on all parts of the sailplane that are within my sight from the cockpit. What changes will happen at the elevator and on the wings? At what point will serious vibration start? What's the reason? I tightly grip the stick, press my body as hard as possible against the sides of the cockpit and into the seat. My ears become as sensitive as the ones of an animal that senses danger. Changes in sound can give important hints and warnings. Then I deploy the boards briefly, make a note of my observations, hear, feel and observe. Then once more I deploy the brakes and put the plane in a steeper dive. The maneuvers must be nerve wracking for my observers on the ground since they are helpless onlookers hoping that the plane will stay intact, while I, in the meantime, am able to act and react. ...

"I'm putting the plane in a dive, increase the speed again and pull the brakes. As expected, the vibrations are becoming so strong that they knock the control stick out of my hand. I have to terminate this test run. I land and report my observations. To minimize the turbulence behind the brakes, we change the configurations of the boards by adding slits and holes.

"I launch again, day after day, week after week. I aerotow to 4000 m, 5000 m or 6000 m. I increase the test spectrum step by step until I reach the final phase, the vertical dive. I know from experience that, even when a plane flies stable at very high speed, the smallest increase in speed can cause flutter. The plane might not stay intact should this happen in the final test phase.

"At that moment I hesitate: I don't have to fly this test; I could land under any excuse and take off again tomorrow. It's my life and I am responsible for it.

"But then I see the picture of my mother in front of me and know that, besides her love for me, she wants me to fulfill my duties. And, therefore, with nerves as tight as piano wires, I plunge down again with dive brakes extended. The plane flies stable and does not exceed 200 km/h. The ground is approaching fast. At about 200 m AGL I pull out of the dive, close the dive brakes and land while my head still throbs. The plane's designer, Hans Jacobs, Professor Georgii, my colleagues and the sailplane construction crew joyfully congratulate me for a job well done."



picture: Dust cover of "Höhen und Tiefen" by H. Reitsch

During Spring of 1979 Hanna spent several weeks at Karl Striedieck's remote mountain-top home in Pennsylvania to work undisturbed on her 5th book about German test pilots. (Ed. Note: the book was never published.) To guarantee Hanna the uppermost privacy, Karl introduced her everywhere as his Aunt Martha, which, with Karl's German background, was believable to everybody. Karl's brother Walter had not been informed about a plot. When he visited Karl's home, while Karl was away, Hanna greeted him and introduced herself as Karl's Aunt Martha, to which Walter responded "When you are Karl's Aunt Martha then I am Santa Claus."

Last World Record

Hanna's friend Dr. Joachim Kuettner often had told her about the record flights along the Appalachian Mountains. When on April 7 the weather turned right for these flights, Hanna, encouraged by Karl, took off in a borrowed ASW 20 to attempt another world record.

She later wrote about this flight in a letter to the well-known German glider pilot Marianne Koch: "The ASW 20 is a beautiful ship. Flying a flapped glider is a great experience. It feels like a bird manipulating its feathers in flight. I had never experienced 'ridge running' before this Out and Return Record flight. Strong NE winds are needed to make these flights possible. A car tow (from Karl's ridge top air strip) launched me just high enough to clear the tree tops and I immediately encountered strong turbulence on the ridge. To reach the official starting point I first had to fly 70 km to the north to Lockhaven, PA. There, the official observer gave me a 'good start'. I was only 600 m over the start line and I had to rush back to the ridge where I finally found lift 200 m AGL.

"Joachim Kuettner (a friend of Hanna, German Soaring pioneer who lives and flies in Colorado) had explained to me the art and technique of ridge running the year before, but it was more exciting and difficult than I imagined. Most of the time you fly at tree top level 150 – 200 m above ground. Landing sites are few and far apart. Because of the strong wind, it's difficult to find the necessary thermals to cross the 18-20 km wide gaps in the ridge system. Connecting to a wave makes this task easier. One gust I encountered was so strong that the landing gear came out. Due to my small size, I had to sit far forward and that made it very difficult to retract the gear. I had to wait until I was exposed to negative g's again to pull the wheel back in. It was bitterly cold in the cockpit while the gear doors were open. The outside temperatures on that April 7 were so low that the trees still had a layer of frost.

"After almost 900 km and 7 hours and 55 minutes in the air, I landed back at Lockhaven airport from where I aero-towed back up again to soar back to my friends' private airstrip, netting a total flight distance of 940 km that day."

From "German Documents 1/1980," Robert E. Drechsler, editor: Hanna Reitsch, Ikarus' Deutsche Schwester (Ikarus' German Sister)

PS. An Out and Return World Record of 801.7 km was granted to Hanna after some documentation controversy. This was to be Hanna's last record flight. She died on August 24, 1979 at age 67 due to a heart attack. On March 11, 1980 Doris Grove became the first woman ever to fly past the 1000 km mark.

| | |
|--|--|
| Born March 29, 1912 | |
| 1932 | Started Medical school to become a missionary doctor, earned glider and power license |
| 1934 –1945 | Gave up Medicine to become a research and test-pilot with the German Research Facility for Motorless Flight (DFS). Earned civilian air-transport license. |
| 1934 | First woman to earn Silver C (#25) |
| 1934-1939 | Participated in gliding expeditions to South America (Brazil and Argentina), to Finland, Portugal, Hungary, USA, Libya and Yugoslavia. |
| 1937 | First women crossing the Alps in a glider. Free Distance World Record (Wasserkuppe-Hamburg). First women named "Flight Captain" *, first women piloting a helicopter. |
| 1938 | Winner of the German Free Distance contest, first indoor helicopter flight, several helicopter World Records. Several Soaring World Records and German records in endurance, free distance, out and return and speed around a triangular course |
| 1932-1979 | first woman to fly a rocket propelled airplane |
| 1942 | first woman to fly a pulse jet airplane, during WWII test pilot in the military test facility Rechlin. Test flights also in the rocket plane Me163 and V1 |
| 1944 | Honors during WWII (although she never was a member of the military): Iron Cross 2 nd Class and as the only woman in German history, Iron Cross 1 st Class, Military Flying Medal in Gold with Diamonds. Honorary Citizen of her home town Hirschberg |
| 1945-1946 | 18 months as an American POW |
| 1952 | 3 rd during the World Soaring Championships in Spain |
| 1955 | German gliding champion |
| 1956 | German distance record (370km) |
| 1957 | German women altitude record (6848m) and first Diamond |
| 1959 | In India as guest of President Pandit Nehru to establish a soaring center |
| 1960 | 2 nd Diamond (300km triangle) |
| 1961 | invitation to the United States and reception by President Kennedy |
| 1962- 1966 | established and led a soaring school in Ghana / Africa by invitation from President Dr. Kwame Nkrumah |
| 1968 | successful participation as a helicopter pilot in the 2 nd German Helicopter Championship |
| 1969 | German women out and return record (523 km) over the Austrian Alps and completion of Diamond Badge |
| 1970 | Winner of the Women Class in the German decentralized championships |
| 1971 | Winner of female class in the 1 st Helicopter World Championships together with co-pilot Doerli Schrimpf |
| 1972 | German woman Speed record over 300km triangle Honorary member of the Society of Experimental Testpilots in California (it was here, that she met Barron Hilton and laid the seed for what is now know as the Barron Hilton Cup). Named Pilot of the year by the IOC. Vice President of the German Organisation of Women Pilots. Honorary member of the "Old Eagle" organization "ZONTA International"**, and many foreign flying groups and IOC (International Order of Characters***). Membership #1 in "Whirly Girls" (Organisation of Women Helicopter Pilots of the Western World) |
| 1975 | Awarded the "International Chain of the Windrose" (Society of Aeronautics and Astronautics) German Out& Return record (644km) over the Austrian Alps |
| 1976 | Woman Out and Return World Record and German Record (715 km) |
| 1977 | Honorary Citizen of the Austrian Town of Traboch / Timmersdorf |
| 1979 | Women Out & Return World Record (805 km) flown on the Appalachian Ridges |
| died Aug. 24, 1979 of heart failure | |

*originally this title was given to PICs of passenger planes. Since 1937 this title was bestowed on pilots (male or female) who were working in aeronautical research or flight test programs and fulfilled the following conditions: at least 30 years of age (Hanna was only 25), 6 years of uninterrupted valid pilot license, flown the last three years as research or test pilot and having logged at least 2000 flight hours.

**world wide service organization dedicated to advancing the status of women. (One of the founding members was Amelia Earhard).

*** organization uniting outstanding pilots of western countries who fought each other during WWII. Members are knighted and given nick- names. Hanna's nickname was "Supersonic Sue". (Hanna never flew any combat missions)

Sources:

Hanna Reitsch: Fliegen mein Leben, 1979 Herbig Verlag. This book has been translated into English and has been recently reissued under the title "The sky my Kingdom" (still available)

Hanna Reitsch: Höhen und Tiefen, 1978 Herbig Verlag

Judy Lomax: Hanna Reitsch, flying for the Vaterland, 1988 John Murray Publisher Ltd (still available)

(Continued from page 3)

Houston, Texas. I'm proud to consider myself a glider pilot and to have a passion in life that some people never find.

I want to thank the SSA for providing youth opportunities like this. I feel that the Bultman award emphasises a very important part of soaring. I've always found great satisfaction in working as ground crew. In addition to giving me yet more opportunity to spend time at the gliderport and a way to help finance my flying, crewing has given me the advantage of being familiar with operations, members and their sailplanes, and the overall "rhythm of things." Crewing has allowed me to become involved with everything in the club, and it has allowed me to further immerse myself in the joys of soaring. I've become one of the "familiar faces" in the club and am always proud to call myself an "airport bum." Wouldn't have it any other way.

Youth must be encouraged to try soaring, and made aware that this is something they can become involved in and succeed at. This sport has changed my life and I can only imagine how many more lives it would change if youth outside of the sport were introduced to it. Thank you deeply -the award will be used to its full potential and every moment will be one that I cherish. "

Sylvia Szafarczyk

Vanessa Stouter (18),

became the first Tidewater Soaring Foundation scholarship student to receive her PPL-G.



Vanessa (l) and her instructor Louise Hibbard (r)

Dale Pizzo

participated in January in the Mile High Soaring cross country camp in Winter Haven, FL. Sarah Steinberg, one of the present



Dale Pizzo (l) Sarah Steinberg (r) in Winter Haven, FL

Women World Champions, was Dale's instructor. The course outline can be found at:

http://www.milehighgliding.com/Florida_PR.htm

Dale will report about this experience in the May issue of Hangar Soaring.

Tying the knot

Anne Wilson became Anne Twite

Mary Arauz became Mary Rust

News from Europe

In summer 2003, the Aero Team Klix soaring club would like to stage a real international soaring competition like a world cup only for women. Please feel free to have a look at the details on

<http://www.aeroteam.de/witchcup.html>.

We would be happy, if you can inform the members of your WSPA about this, maybe via e-mail and/or your homepage.

For any further questions please write a e-mail or use the form on ourwitchcup page.

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Ontario, CA was an ideal location for a mid-winter Soaring Convention. The weather was most inviting; airport, hotels and a new convention center were in close proximity to each other.

Due to an oversight, WSPA did not have a booth this year, but the 1-26 Association graciously let us use a corner of their table to display promotional material. THANK YOU 1-26 ASSOCIATION.

15 women (including Rita Ferreira Pires from Portugal) and 4 brave men attended this year's luncheon. **Soaring Convention 2002** W S P A E l k e K l e b e r w h o learned to fly on the Wasserkuppe in Germany became a WSPA member. WELCOME ELKE.

WSPA member Cindy Brickner was one of the featured convention speakers. Topic of her presentation was "Wave Soaring Primer".

Several commercial operators showed interest in displaying WSPA promotional material at their businesses. Burt Compton from Miami Soaring would like to promote WSPA at Sun and Fun and at Oshkosh.

Purnal "Judge" McWorther presented WSPA with a \$100 donation from his wife Pat. Pat is not a pilot but considers WSPA worthwhile to support. THANKS PAT and JUDGE

WSPA member Alexis Latner from Houston, TX has offered to coordinate the group's future presence at events like the convention.

The next Convention will be in Dayton, Ohio from January 23-25, 2003. See you there

We still need nominations for Regional Representatives from North Central, South and North West Region