



ARIZONA SOARING ASSOCIATION

# Air Currents

Summer, 2002

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## Hot Items

- ASA pilots win at local Region 9 contest
- ASA Clubhouse at Turf
- Next membership meeting July 23rd

## Region 9 Contest: ASA & Turf Success

### Region 9 Success Stories

The Region 9 soaring contest, held at Turf Soaring during Memorial Day week resulted in a number of success stories for ASA and the gliding community. Not only did local fliers turn in outstanding performances, but also ASA and Turf Soaring put on an impressive effort to bring the event to a successful conclusion

### Local Winners

Hans Heydrich, one of ASA's most aggressive and experienced pilots, brought home his first contest win by beating Chris Woods into second place in the 15-meter class. Chris is a well-known producer, known for his soaring movies and he gave an outstanding performance in his first return to racing after a long absence from soaring.

Visitor Dan Sorensen took first place in Standard class, easing out local favorite Alan Reeter into second place.

Barbara MacLean took first place in Sports class after nearly losing her lead in a nail-biting final day challenge from second-placed Mike Stringfellow.



### R 9 Soaring Conditions

Despite several attempts by CD Wally Raisen to send the field north, weather conditions never fully cooperated, leaving most tasks over the familiar "milk run" along the Aguila valley. Apart from the final day, soaring conditions proved strong, although blue conditions prevailed. Almost complete cloud cover on the last day produced a late start, but surprisingly good conditions in the few sunny spots.

### Organization

As usual, contest manager Bob Blakemore produced a successful venue. The biggest hit was the air-conditioned tent installed on the Turf lawn for pilot meetings, logger downloads and evening events. Local hero was scorer Paul Jorgenson who fought a number of software issues on the final day before finalizing most scores that evening.

## Turf Improvements—Clubhouse and Gravel

Just a month after the ASA Board approved the acquisition of a trailer as a compromise clubhouse to be located at Turf, it was installed and up and running in time for Region 9. With a lot of effort from Rick Rubscha, Cliff Hilty and Bill Poore, amongst others, the new clubhouse offers a place for ASA members to shelter from the heat, store equipment and download log files on computers there. The trailer is equipped with

running water, electricity and a porta-potty.

Roy Coulliette has also transformed the nearby tie-down area at Turf with a fresh layer of gravel and a larger, improved cable layout. This dust-control measure has greatly improved living conditions on the site.

Come and see for yourself!

## Schedule of Events

- July 2  
Board Meeting  
Standard Class Nationals, Hobbs
- July 15  
15-meter Nationals, Tonopah
- July 23  
General Membership Meeting
- July 30  
Sports Class and 18-meter nationals, Lubbock

# July 2002

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 <i>ASA Board</i>	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15 <i>15m Nationals</i>	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23 <i>ASA Meeting</i>	24	25	26	27
28	29	30 <i>18m Nationals</i>	31			

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## 2002 Committees

## From the Editor

Here we are, halfway through the soaring season, with Region 9 now safely behind us. Hosting a Regional contest involves a lot of effort on behalf of the volunteers who organize and run the event. My thanks to all those volunteers who made it happen. Although a few ASA members questioned whether the effort was worthwhile, overall the majority supported it.

We were able to host a successful contest with 36 aircraft and with no major accidents or hitches. Despite having only one runway, Turf succeeded in launching the fleet every day in well under an hour—even on a day when a tow plane lost its engine.

The visitors without exception praised the organization and running of the contest and

many will be back again.

The benefits to ASA were not only training our pilots to fly in contests, but improving many aspects of their flying skills. I for one flew further and more aggressively than I might otherwise have done, learning skills that are useful in everyday flying.

The improvements at Turf will also enhance our flying experience there. Even many of those who initially opposed the clubhouse are now agreeing that it offers very useful benefits.

Roy went over and above what he needed to do to improve the facility, and the gravel and improved tie-down areas are ours to enjoy in the future.



## ASA's New Turf Clubhouse



## How I Broke My New Glider By Mike Parker

This is my account of how I broke my new ASH-26E motor glider. I was very lucky to have no injuries and only modestly damage the glider. I write this in the hope that you will learn something from my misfortune. I was careful and methodical in my approach to flying this new glider. Nevertheless the accident happened to an experienced pilot.

I had five previous flights in the new sailplane in the preceding days and had a careful cockpit checkout by Col. Andrew Gordon on Feb 2, 2002, which included review of operating procedures and preflight items. A slow methodical preflight of all systems was done using the flight and maintenance manuals as reference.

Reading this account at home, it will be easy to see many mistakes that I made. But please give me a little credit for partially managing a high-stress and unfamiliar situation that developed very quickly. The entire flight lasted only 40 seconds over rough desert, and I never got more than 100 feet above the ground. My previous flights in the ASH-26E built up enough experience to avoid a serious accident with only a small margin to spare. I could have easily allowed additional margin for the unexpected. If I had, perhaps my glider would not be broken.

**Date of Incident:** Feb 3, 2002 Time: 4 PM

**Weather:** No factor. Wind less than 5 knots crosswind from right.

**Location:** El Tiro gliderport Sailplane: ASH-26E

**Pilot:** Michael Parker, Private Pilot SEL with Instrument rating: 753 SEL hours. Commercial Glider Pilot with 1320 glider hours, of which 155 hours are in Stemme motor glider (different prop arrangement). About 2 hours in ASH-26E. Glider flight instructor

**Injuries:** None

**Observed Damage:** Collapsed landing gear with broken fiberglass in wheel well and damaged landing gear doors. Damaged transponder antenna behind wheel. Small holes in bottom of left wing skin near center of aileron, scratches on aileron, slight delamination of trailing edge of aileron at one spot.

Flight six in ASH-26E when incident happened:

I prepared for takeoff using the full length of paved runway 26 and a wing runner. Flaps were set to position 3 to avoid the complication of changing the flap setting on lift-off. I went through the full pre-takeoff checklist including closing and locking spoilers. Then I opened the spoilers to activate the wheel brake while running up to 4000 rpm and checking ignition. At this point I closed the spoilers with engine running and initiated takeoff by going to maximum RPM. I must have not locked the spoilers at this point.

Shortly after liftoff at about 50 feet altitude I heard a slight bang and the stick forces and climb rate of the glider changed. In retrospect this was the spoilers deploying, but I did not realize it.

I initially considered aborting the takeoff straight ahead, but I did not feel that I could get down before the fence. I continued straight planning to land in the desert if necessary. All thoughts of the emergency checklist disappeared while I concentrated on maintaining airspeed and looking for the best landing spot.

After a few seconds, I realized that I was maintaining altitude and the engine seemed stable. I began a shallow turn to the right towards the winch runway while planning to land in the desert if I could not maintain altitude. As the turn continued I realized that I was climbing very slowly and could make it back to the main runway. Since the main runway is actually 3 runways side-by-side I did not need to turn again, but could land straight ahead at about a 20 degree diagonal across the runway. I had the airspeed stable at the blue-line (best rate of climb) airspeed of 51 knots. Although the ship seemed to be climbing slowly, I decided that immediate landing was far preferable to taking the risk of the situation getting worse.

I checked the gear down twice at this point. It was still down; I had not planned to raise it until getting above pattern altitude. By this point I was at 100 feet AGL, my highest point so far. Once I was certain that I could make the runway, I figured that all I had to do was land the sailplane in a normal sailplane landing. I had full confidence, from my previous five landings in the ASH-26E, and many simulated ropebreaks with students in Blaniks and Grobs from this same runway, that I could put the ship down in the available runway. Unfortunately the last thing on my mind at that point was losing altitude, and I did not include the spoilers in my pre-landing check. So I still didn't discover that they were out.

I retarded the engine abruptly as if I was releasing from a towplane. Airspeed decayed rapidly, and I quickly lowered the nose to avoid a stall. I had to put the nose very far down to keep speed. By the time that the nose got down, the ground was approaching so quickly that I immediately initiated a flare. It seemed that the glider was slow to respond to elevator input, and at first it seemed that I was going to impact nose first. However the nose did come up enough for me to impact in a level altitude while still descending rapidly. I had the impression that I dropped it in from about 10 feet above the ground.

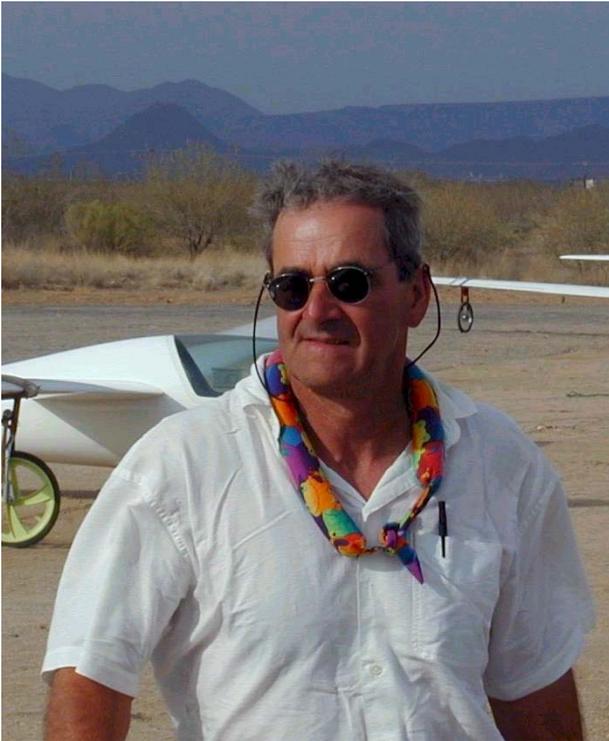
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# Region 9 Contest Report

## Turf Soaring: May 30th—June 6th, 2002

### Spectacular Practice Day

After a spectacular unofficial practice day on Saturday May 29th, which took many competitors on a TAT to the Grand Canyon, contest Director Wally Raisanen tried hard all week to find conditions good enough to send the Standard and 15 meter classes back north. Although lift was strong on many days, it just stopped short of being able to consistently launch the group into the Bradshaws.



15-meter winner Hans Heydrich

The one task that had this goal saw a number of landouts amongst those failing to make the mountains. This led to the majority of the tasks being set along the “milk run” Aguila valley. Nevertheless, with the exception of the final day, soaring conditions were good to excellent.

### Live Web Reports

Highlights of the Region 9 contest were live web reports, posted throughout the day as the action unfolded by Bob Blakemore. The ASA web site recorded a record number of hits as the week progressed, resulting in the server crashing at one point.

### Local Pilots Win

Notable successes from local pilots were Hans Heydrich and Barbara MacLean, who won the 15-meter and sports classes; and Alan Reeter, who came a close second in Standard class. Good showings were also put on by Mike Stringfellow, second in sports class, and Tony Smolder, who just failed to make third place in 15-meter. Vincent Esposito (1AX) re-



Sports Class winner Barbara MacLean

ceived a special award for his landout record, which included one on the par-5 hole of the local golf course.

A 15-member group from the Air Force soaring team, based in Colorado Springs, also added to the event. Their young 1-26 pilots showed some good skills, completing the tasks in conditions sometimes challenging for their ships.

Altogether, Region 9 was a fun and interesting contest that brought together fliers from six western states in a well-run and successful event run entirely by ASA volunteers.

More region 9 Photographs on Page 7

# Mike Parker's Accident... continued

## Conclusion:

### Critical Pilot Errors:

1. Starting the takeoff roll by closing the spoilers with engine at high speed rather than returning the engine to idle which would have allowed for a more leisurely check that the spoilers were locked.
2. Not locking the spoilers. Was the seat too far back to easily push the spoiler into locked position?
3. Not placing my hand touching the flaps and spoilers rather than the throttle to insure that they did not shift position while taking off. I always did this in the Stemme. Why not here?
4. Not checking the spoilers and the flap position after the loss of climb ability.
5. Not doing a proper pre-landing check including the spoilers and setting flaps to position 4.
6. Cutting engine power abruptly rather than a smooth reduction.
7. Not speeding up before reducing engine power.

### Other Things That Might Have Made a Difference:

1. Put in a headset before operating under power. It is very difficult to hear the radio at maximum rpm. I did not hear the pilot who called to tell me the spoilers were open.
2. Do a few takeoffs from a longer runway like Ryan field before operating from El Tiro. Operating from Ryan would have allowed extra margin for straight ahead landings in the event of problems.
3. Review emergency procedures more (not that I didn't do a fair amount of this) before EVERY flight until everything is automatic.
4. Takeoff in flap position 4 until at least 500 feet AGL. Flap position 3 is recommended for aerotow, but flap position 4 is recommended for self-launch. The climb rate is almost identical to position 3, but 4 gives more margin at slow speed. Flap position 4 is more appropriate than 3 for landing. The flap would have already been at the right position when the emergency developed.

### The few things that I did right:

1. Methodical approach starting from things that I was familiar with and progressing towards the unknown. Before attempting my first self-launch, I mastered aerotows and landings. Then I practiced engine operation, first tied down on the ground and then at 3,000 feet AGL to allow time to do things slowly and recover from errors.
2. I correctly decided that I didn't have room to abort the takeoff.
3. I recognized the ship was holding altitude (barely) and realized that a straight-ahead landing was not necessary.
4. I flew the ship right at the best climb speed and made a shallow banked turn back to the field without stalling or digging a wingtip into the desert.
5. I chose to land at a slight angle to the wide runway rather than attempting to make another turn.
6. Once I realized that the glider was in a very slight climb, I didn't fiddle with anything trying to improve it.
7. I didn't pull up the landing gear, and I remembered to check that it was down.
8. After the stupid cutting of power, I recognized that the airspeed was unexpectedly decaying rapidly and got the nose down in time to avoid a bad accident.
9. I kept wings level, and I got the nose back up in time to hit landing gear first.

## Summary

So what happened? In my haste to transition to glider mode, where I felt confident in landing safely, I forgot to allow for the drag of the propeller and pylon. On top of this, full spoilers unknowingly added drag, reduced lift, and increased stalling speed. These factors caused the rapid airspeed decay. I don't know if I initiated the flare too late, or if the glider stalled while I flared.

However once I mistakenly cut the power with full spoilers at such a low altitude, things happened extremely rapidly and the outcome was probably pre-ordained. I actually feel that I did fairly well to avoid a much more serious crash given that I was stupid enough to abruptly cut the power.

# Photographs from Region 9



Contest manager Bob Blakemore



Scorer Paul and CD Wally



Above & below, dinner at the tent



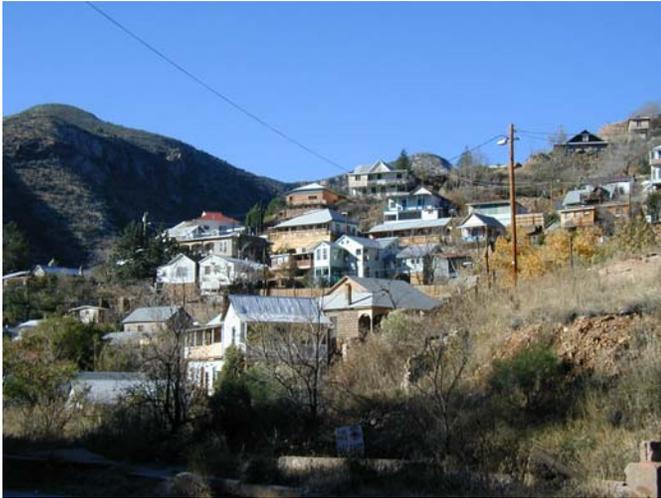
Above, Peter, Casey, & Rick. Below, home!



# Bisbee Soaring Camp in May

## Bisbee Welcomes Soaring

After a two-year hiatus, partly resulting from changes at Bisbee Municipal Airport, Arizona soaring activities resumed with a successful four-day camp from Thursday May 16th through Sunday May 19th. The Tucson Soaring Club flew in a tow-plane from El-Tiro and also brought



**Bisbee Town**

several of their club ships to Bisbee, while ASA racers joined the Tucson group for the weekend. Cliff Hilty, the more enterprising of the latter, flew his Ventus from Turf to Bisbee on Friday, a flight that had him low from Turf through Scottsdale to Chandler before hitting the stronger lift and clouds to the south.

Despite stories that gliders might not be as welcome at Bisbee as they once were, we found the new management to be friendly, helpful and enthusiastic. New airport directors Kathleen Fellows and Robert Swan made us feel at home, with coffee and doughnuts in the lounge and even waived the normal tie-down fee for the soaring group.

A reporter from the local newspaper, the Bisbee Daily Review, also turned up at the field, writing a front-page leader story for the local community.

## Excellent Soaring

Soaring conditions were excellent during the whole camp, with lift from late morning feeding a sky with increasing cumulus clouds. On Thursday, Friday and Saturday, fliers were treated to some of the best of Arizona soaring conditions with 8-knot thermals to cloud bases over 16,000 feet.

Over the four-day period, a total of 30 launches were made, 20 fun flights by Tucson and Phoenix pilots and 10 for the ASA races on Saturday and Sunday.

## ASA Races

On Saturday, ASA racers were set a 220-mile task from Bisbee to Lordsburg in New Mexico, back along I 10 to Bowie and return via Bisbee/Douglas airport. From my perspective, the flight over the spectacular Chiricahua mountains was alone worth the trip, even though I was



**On the Ramp at Bisbee**

outraced by winner Mike Parker (at a tad over 80 mph) and just about everyone else. Topping the peaks at over 16,000 feet, we flew over the impressive Chiricahua National Monument and then down into Lordsburg, actually over the tops of the lower cumulus in the valley.

Sunday dawned cloudy and windy, and only a few intrepid racers decided to compete. They were rewarded with unusually strong conditions under an almost complete overcast. Ralph Bergh won the short out-and-return task of 200km to Willcox and back at a speed of over 90 mph.

## Bisbee Activities

The trip wasn't just about flying, though, and the group enjoyed many of the local amenities, especially restaurants, during their stay. Noteworthy were Café Roka, with perhaps the best Italian/European food in the area as well as live jazz and the new and funky Parana's Bistro with its outstanding Tapas and steak.

Local hotels & B&Bs, including the Copper Queen and Calumet Guest house were overrun with soaring pilots and dominated by breakfasts full of glider talk.

We all enjoyed the cool air, absence of dust and outstanding soaring conditions, vowing to return sooner next time.