



Northern California  
Aerobatic Club

CHAPTER 38

# THE ACRONAUT

Volume 9 - Number 3



Formation Aerobatics at Tutima Academy, King City, CA.

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### Chapter Membership Dues

Just a reminder that your Chapter 38 dues for 2008 are NOW PAYABLE.

To simplify bookkeeping, we levy Chapter dues on a calendar year basis (Jan 1 – Dec 31).

Use the form on the last page of the Newsletter, or go to the Website and you can link to PayPal. Please provide/update all the requested information.

Just \$25/year, or \$30 for a family, to renew (or join) – and continue to enjoy the many benefits of Chapter membership (including practice box usage).

# President's Post

*Darren Pleasance*



Greetings Chapter 38ers,

For those of you who were unable to attend last month's Chapter meeting, you missed out on a great presentation by Ben Freelove on the topic of designing a fun and well-structured Free program. I found the talk really helpful with several new ideas, as well as many reminders of the important fundamentals of good freestyle design.

Howard and Mike also talked about their thrilling formation flying experience at Sean Tucker's school. If any of you are thinking about learning to fly formation aerobatics, Howard and Mike gave a very compelling endorsement of their experience.

Looking forward to March and beyond, we have a lot of activities on our calendar. Critique sessions will be starting up soon and Andrew will be sending out a schedule for those sessions. Brett Goldsmith has also volunteered to organize a demo of 3-D RC Models out at New Jerusalem, which would allow us to have a fun critique day while also have a great



**Turbo Tucan. Thrust to weight ratio of 1.5:1.**

demonstration of some pretty impressive RC model flying. We'll also have a few fly-outs which we'll get on your calendars in the next week or so allowing you to plan appropriately.

David Kervinen, the owner and creator of the

Turbo-Tucan, has also agreed to come talk to us in a couple of months about the plane and what it was like to design and fly

it. I'll make sure we get that session calendared with plenty of advanced notice so everyone has the best chance of attending.

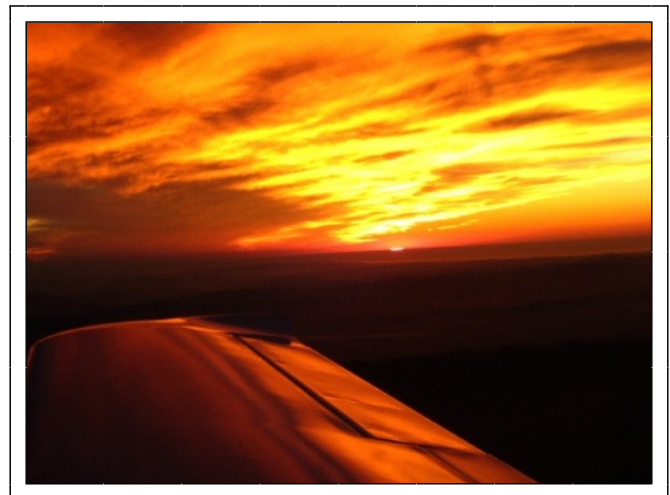
Lastly, I'm off to Mexico in a couple of days with my family to go do some "extreme whale watching" at San Ignacio lagoon. This is where the Gray Whales give birth to their calves, and then spend the winter before heading back to Alaska. There are park rangers at the lagoon that will take us out to see the whales, and apparently the whales will come right up to the boat and ask to be petted and touched. The pictures I've seen are truly amazing so I'll be taking plenty of pictures myself and will plan to share them all with you at the Chapter meeting coming up next weekend (3/9).

Overall, things are going well with the Chapter and we continue to attract new members and we have a great agenda for us all this year.

Mark your calendars for our next Chapter meeting, which will be on **Sunday, March 9th at 4:00 p.m. at Attitude Aviation**. Hope to see you all there for my Whales presentation.

Blue Skies,

*Darren*



**Sunset photo by Alexander Wolf**

If you don't get in that plane you'll regret it. Maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow, but soon and for the rest of your life.

— Rick Blaine in the 1942 movie 'Casablanca'

## Recover Jobs!



**WAR birds:** Both of these planes were recovered by Bernie Vasquez of Whites Aircraft Restoration (WAR) in Vacaville. The S-2B is Spencer Suderman's—the one formally painted in HAVOC promotional colors. The recover job took 3 months.



Spencer's "Meteor" Pitts on the ground.



Dean Hickman-Smith and Dave Watson. The plane was flown to the Aviat factory in Wyoming for its new skin.

## WINGNUTS by Darrin Silver





# Formation Flight Training

by Howard Kirker

*Note: For those members at February's Chapter meeting, this is largely a rehash of my oral description – apologies for the repetition!*

Last Fall, Mike Eggen queried me about my interest in taking some formation flight training together in King City. You know the place, Tutima Academy of Aviation Safety, where our long-time Chapter buddy “Ben Freestyle” works. Now, I have to admit that my initial reaction was “why bother”? I’m having plenty of fun doing competitions, it’s not in my budget, and I have no experience with formation work – not surprisingly, since no one’s really interested in flying wing with a Great Lakes at 100 mph. But Mike’s a friend, so I said “sure, I’ll think about it”. Well, to shorten the story, Mike persisted, and the end of January found us in King City ready to give it a try.



**Ben Frelove in the briefing room**

Cutting to the chase -- best thing that could have happened to me! The three days we spent at Tutima were full, challenging, rewarding, and, in a word, INTENSE. Formation flight was a thrill unlike any I’ve experienced thus far in my flying life. Practical; no (I’ve no plans



for an air show career). Expensive; yes. Exhilarating; beyond description.

Mike and I were matched up with a young German, Norbert (a member of his country’s AWAC team), and we went through our training as a threesome. We didn’t know it at the start, but this was a real plus, as our various three-ship activities added fun, variety, aesthetics, and difficulty that may not have been present with just a flight-of-two. The three instructors were Ken Erickson, Ben Frelove, and Bill Stein – all

fantastic, and I can’t possibly compliment them enough on their skill, attitude, and commitment to our progress, success, and safety. Six friends, we were basically a family for three solid days of dedicated formation-think. It was a special time.

As the name of the business suggests, and as the very process of learning and flying formation demands, the watchword throughout was SAFETY. Formation flight is not risk free, and every aspect of our training emphasized that. Lot’s of time in briefings on communications, procedures, technique, but especially safety. Lot’s of time talking casually – safety. And of course, when flying – safety. Bill led most of the briefings, and the depth of his experience and knowledge in formation flying was evident and impressive. He was great to fly with, as well. Many of you have aerobatic experience with Ken and Ben, so you know they’re capable instructors and just plain good-people, as well.

We went through a process of learning station-keeping in straight-and-level, turns, climbs and dives, wing-overs, lazy eights -- and loops! We took turns flying lead, flying wing, safely changing positions, and joining up. Check out the accompanying photos (they’re Mike’s)



for a better sense of what we did than anything I can offer in words. That’s me (and Bill) in the Extra – no Great Lakes for this session.

As I understand it, Tutima pretty much hand-crafts each training program to meet the desires and skill levels of the students, so our experience may not be typical. I’m not going to try and describe any process, schedule, “how to’s”, or the like – if you’re interested, get together with Tutima and they’ll set a session up to fit your situation. But be forewarned, finding an open block of time may be a challenge; the normal aerobatic instruction activity and airshow work, solo and as the Collaborators, keeps them plenty busy “in season”. My recommendation – “try it, you’ll like it!”

One major “take-away” from this experience – don’t fly formation casually. Make sure everyone involved is thoroughly briefed, that emergency scenarios have been thought through,



## From the Editor

*Che Barnes*

Greetings fellow chapter members. Special thanks to those who sent in pictures and, especially, Howard Kirker for drafting an excellent article on his experience at Sean Tucker's school in King City. Getting great input from club members makes quality newsletters easier to put together.

We are pretty lucky to have the Sean Tucker's Tutima school in our backyard. People come from all over the world to experience the training offered there. I did my initial spin training and Pitts flying at King City and it was one of the greatest flying experiences that I have had. Howard's article reminds me that I'd like to go back!

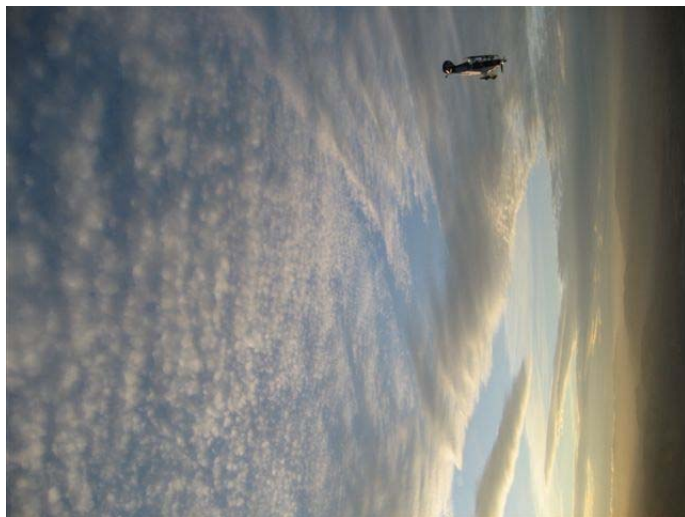
Spring is here, and there is nothing like going to the airport on a warm spring day. Throw in a clear blue sky and a few white puffy clouds and the sky beckons. I was out at the Davis airport the other day and took a few moments to stand by the approach end of the runway and watch some Cessna 152s practice touch and go's. Standing back and watching the machines from a distance, listening to the engines speed up a bit and come back to idle as the pilot's adjusted their glide path, hearing the wind over the airframe, the wheels chirp, and seeing the gear flex a bit on touchdown refreshed my fascination with aviation. The airplane-pilot combination (and don't forget the mechanic!) represents a true marvel of human accomplishment and is rewarding experience to participate in. Spring is the season of new things. For anyone reading this who shares this fascination of flight and has been thinking of getting more involved, get to it! Take a lesson, set a goal, visit an airport, get out there—where there is a will there is a way.

Oh...and when your done tell us about it and send an e-picture for the newsletter!

All the best, *-Che*

and that you're completely comfortable with the person(s) who'll be flying right next to you; in a word, it's about TRUST. That's where good friends come in. Thanks, Mike.

*-Howard*



**Aviators in Alaska**



## IAC Chapter 38 Membership Application/Renewal Form

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EAA #: \_\_\_\_\_

Certificate #: \_\_\_\_\_

EAA Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Judge:  Regional  National

Competition:  None  Basic  Sportsman  Intermediate  Advanced  Unlimited

Aircraft: \_\_\_\_\_

N #: \_\_\_\_\_

Referred By: \_\_\_\_\_

Dues:  Single Membership (\$25/year)  Family Membership (\$30/year)

Send with check, made payable to "International Aerobatic Club Chapter 38", to:  
Howard Kirker, IAC38 Treasurer - 2279 Ocaso Camino - Fremont, CA 94539

### Next Meeting

Sunday, March 9th, 2008

4 PM

Attitude Aviation

Livermore Airport, CA.



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