



Northern California
Aerobatic Club

CHAPTER 38

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THE ACRONAUT

Volume 7 - Number 11



Borrego 2006: Team 59AC
Dave Watson, Dean Hickman-Smith, Martin Price and Sal Webber

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Next Chapter Meeting:

**Sunday November 12th
3 pm, Attitude Aviation
Livermore Airport**

Real confidence in the air is bred only by mistakes made and recovered from at a safe altitude, in a safe ship, and seated on a good parachute.

- Rodney Jackson, "A Lesson In Stunting", 1930.

Prez's Post

Darren Pleasance



Gobble, gobble...

Greetings everyone. I hope this newsletter finds you all safe and happy as we round the corner and head into the holiday season. Lots of things going on so let me touch on just a few of them.

First, let me put in a quick plug for our guest speaker this month, Bill Stein, who's going to share with us his perspectives on formation flying, and illustrate this with some great videos from his time as a pilot with the Red Baron Aerobatic Team. This is a great presentation so please make every effort to attend. **We'll be starting at 3:00 this month due to the time change and will likely go until 5:00** given my expectations that the attendees will have lots of questions for Bill, plus we have to conduct our Chapter elections at the end of the meeting.



Air Show Favorite: Bill Stein with his Edge 540

On other fronts, for those of you who participated in heckling Allyson at our September meeting as she attempted to describe the proposed category rules changes, the proposal was voted down by the IAC Board this month. As such, next year's category structure will remain identical to this year's. We'll have to see what happens with the category structure going forward as there were a lot of very good suggestions from our members, plus many other on the acro exploder, that could have taken our existing structure and made it a bit better and more fun. However, since the changes suggested by many were quite different from what was proposed by the Committee, it was felt that it had to go back before the membership in a new, rewritten form, before the Board would be prepared to vote on changing the category structure. I personally liked the idea of putting an unknown

in the equivalent of Sportsman and for making Primary just a bit longer than it is today. I guess we'll have to see how this saga evolves over the coming year. Stay tuned...

On other fronts, we continue to work with the FAA around the rewriting of Chapter 48 and Chapter 49 of the regs to improve the consistency and speed for getting aerobatic practice areas approved through local FSDOs. I'm teamed up with number of others around the country and have been reviewing draft language from the FAA and providing input to help drive to a clearer set of guidelines for future FSDO and Chapters alike.

A little closer to home, there were some interesting goings-on over at Tracy last month. Apparently, the Tracy Airport Commission (TAC) and the Tracy City Council had a falling-out of sorts over a disagreement for the long-term plan for Tracy airport. The TAC had a much grander vision for what they wanted to see the airport become, including runway extensions and the like, while the City of Tracy had a much more modest view of the airport's future, supported by an external consultant's report. The result of these two different views was the resignation of many of the TAC members, including several who had been strong supporters of ours over the past two years. We'll have to see what, if any, impact this

has on us over the coming year and at our time of renewal a year or so from now. Never a dull moment in Tracy for sure...

Lastly, Andrew and Yuichi finally got their new plane, a beautiful Pitts S2S. I'm sure they'd be happy to show it to us after the Chapter meeting for those who are interested. It's a ground-up restored S2S, with a monster engine and Steve Wolf wings that is apparently quite

the performer. In other equally exciting news, Dave Watson's Yak managed to start and fly all the way to Borrego, complete four flights, and return home without needing any new engine, canopy, propeller, air compressor, or radio, so a huge congratulations to Dave (if everything's working, it's usually time to sell, isn't it...).

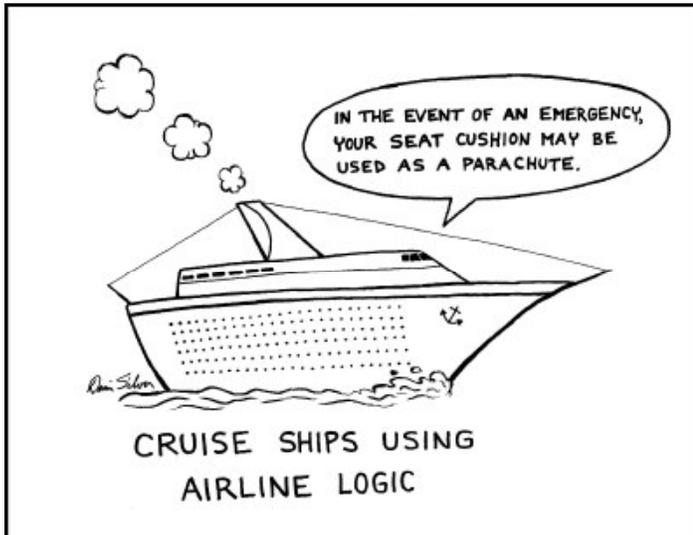
Our next meeting is Sunday, November 12th at Attitude Aviation at 3:00 p.m. [NOTE THE NEW TIME] so I hope to see you all there.

Blue skies...

- Darren

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From the Editor

Che Barnes

Many thanks to the contributors this month.

In particular, Darrin Silver, who contributes his comics like clockwork.

Also, excellent articles by Sal Webber and Martin Price. Much appreciated.

Brett Goldsmith sent in some pictures of last month's meeting.

Eric Chasanoff sent in a series of great photos of Borrego. Thanks Eric.

Remember, member contributions are the greatest. If you have something for the newsletter, send it over!



NEXT CHAPTER MEETING

Don't miss Bill Stein's presentation on formation flying and his perspective as a pilot for the Red Baron Aerobatic Team!
Livermore Airport, Attitude Aviation, 3 PM.

Borrego: Table for Thirteen Please

Sal Webber



Borrego Springs 2006

This past Borrego contest was probably my best yet and not because of my flying. At last year's contest, I had stayed at the Borrego Springs resort and realized that this was the sort of place that Jaymie and my son could hang out in if they got tired of watching a contest. So, I made plans for the whole family to go down with me to Borrego this year. Meanwhile, Dean Hickman-Smith and Dave Watson would fly the Super D and the Yak down. Dean also brought his family down (his wife Sue and three beautiful little girls) and his parents who happened to be visiting from England at the time. And to top things off, first timer Martin Price had his wife Bobbi Jo join us as well. There, if you go back and count all those people you get thirteen...and the makings for a great weekend.

This was the first contest that my family would see me fly in and it was also the first contest that I would fly without a safety pilot. I'm a low time pilot and basically every hour I've flown since I got my license just before Paso '05 has been either aerobatic practice or a cross country to a practice or competition. Two weeks before the competition I got to use my birthday present from wife by going down to Wayne Handley's place for some intense spin training and confidence building. The following weekend I got in two flights with Dave Watson coaching me from the ground. I was feeling great in the plane and super excited about the contest. My first two competition flights were pretty good. The only faults I got were long after on the reverse wedge fig 4...I didn't have my timing perfected without the extra weight in the back seat...the Super D is a rocket without 200lbs in the back seat! By the last flight, I could tell I wasn't focusing well and my flying showed it. I really screwed up a loop to the point where even my wife could tell that something wasn't right. She later told me it kind of looked like the Enterprise Rental car logo lower case "e". Oh well, I didn't care. I was more excited about the fact that I had just completed my first con-

test solo. It was so nice to have our families there for support. My 6 year old son told me my last flight was the best he had ever seen...of course I think it was the only one that he paid attention to all weekend...but it still made me smile when he said that and I quickly forgot about my enterprise logo loop! (BTW, I did rent from Enterprise as well through the IAC website and got a great rate! Give'em a try next time you have a need for a rental car.)

On Thursday night after practice, the Chamber of Commerce put on a great barbeque. There was an air show as the sun was setting. The air temperature was perfect, there was nice music, the food was great, the folks in the air show were doing their thing, and there were a lot of folks asking questions about aerobatics. It was such a perfect little evening. It was a great start to the contest. On Friday, we decided to get everyone together for dinner and decided we'd check with the resort restaurant to see if they could fit us in. Not only could they fit



The Judge's Line

us in, but they gave us a room where the kids could get as rowdy as they wanted. The staff was great, the food was great, and we all had a great time telling stories, laughing and having a few beers. There were a couple tables that also got seated in the same room with us...sorry Howard and Eric. On Saturday, we had a nice banquet and told a few more hilarious stories, drank a few more beers and all vowed that we would be back next year. Sunday morning, I headed over to Carlsbad for a day at Lego land as a reward for my son before we got on a jet back to SJC.

Congratulations to CH36 for putting on a great contest and I'm looking forward to next year as well. This year will be tough to beat.

- Sal

Last Chapter Meeting: RC Demo by the Flying Electrons

Che Barnes



At the last chapter meeting the group was treated to a demonstration by Skip Martin and Craig Wissman of the Livermore Flying Electrons. Kudos to Brett Goldsmith for organizing the get-together.

Their club is similar to ours in that they love aviation—although they dabble with it in a different way—through radio controlled

aircraft.

As Skip Martin puts it, flying in a cockpit, to him, is just sensation—he'd rather see the end result of his efforts from the ground. This is fitting, as he is also an Air Traffic Controller with Oakland Center!

The performance of these model airplanes is impressive. Skip showed off his scale version of an Edge 540—although its scale performance would put any full sized Edge to shame. Its balsa wood construction weighs in at 22 pounds with an



Skip Martin above. Craig Wissman below.



engine capable of 25 pounds of thrust, giving it unlimited vertical performance. The most significant performance restriction that he experiences is the fact that the airplane can get out of visual range. During Skip's demo flight, he showed off every maneuver imaginable—including hanging the airplane by its prop and demonstrating

full control via the rudder, elevator, and full span ailerons working with the prop wash. Try that in an Edge!

Oh, and it has a smoke system too. Airshow ready.



Members were asked to submit captions for the above photo of Allen Silver during a parachute lecture.

Here is what they came up with (in no particular order):

Don't try this at home. - Donald Davidson

Adjusting Weight and Balance - Peter Jensen

Re-usable diapers are making a comeback! - Spencer Suderman

...and then bend over and kiss your ass goodbye. - Martin Price

What happens on the chair, stays on the chair. - Joe Bonacci

I think I am going to bail out of dinner tonight. - Che Barnes

And they say you never forget your first jump. - Joe Bonacci

Should we tell him the straps are loose, naaaaahhhh - Joe Bonacci

Thanks for being a sport, Allen. Hopefully I won't get charged extra for my next parachute re-pack! Anyone has any other pics for this send 'em in! - Editor

First Time Contest at Borrego 2006

Martin Price

It was a dark and stormy night... but that was months ago and nothing to do with this story. Instead, it was a dark and somewhat cold Thursday morning that saw me checking in for my Southwest flight to San Diego en route to Borrego Springs. I was a little concerned as to what the TSA would make of the flight gear in my carry-on but their current focus is on the great Shampoo Crackdown and they're not too worried about pilots these days. I breezed through and, mindful of the fact that you should always eat before flying aerobatics,

started my day with the largest burrito I could lay my hands on. It's important to prepare for these things properly, after all. The preparation was for my first

contest in the Primary category, flying 59AC, Dave Watson's Super Decathlon. I'd flown the sequence a couple of times with Yuichi and a few more with Dave – terrorizing the good folk of the Tracy area as small children clung to their mothers and said things like “that 45 was way shallow” and “he totally barreled that roll”. Now it was time to do it for real. Sal Webber and Dean Hickman-Smith were due to fly the same plane in Sportsman, with Dave flying Advanced in his Yak, so we had quite a team heading down there. Dean and Dave had just left Livermore in formation as I met up with Sal and his family in San Diego for the 2-hour drive through the mountains.

First impressions on arriving? Well, there's a whole lot of not much in Borrego Springs. However, what it has, or at least

had, were two neat rows of aerobatic aircraft on the ramp with one practicing in the box. A real contest – awesome. And so to my first “real contest” experiences: registration, booking a practice slot and – since we were waiting for the planes to come in – some lunch. Nobody can ever accuse me of not taking my preparation seriously.

Our “fleet” made it in around 2:15, which made my speculatively booked 3pm slot look rather aggressive but we made it. Emptied the plane, checked the fuel, tech completed and I

launched into the desert sky just in time with my intrepid safety pilot in the back seat. With things happening so fast I have barely any recollection of that practice at all. I know I flew roughly the right fig-

ures in pretty much the right order somewhere in the vicinity of the box. As I cruised back out of the box somebody on Unicom said “that was a pretty good looking primary” and that was good enough for me.

That was me done for the day, although the poor Super D had more work to do with Sal's practice, Dean's practice and, best of all, Dave flying the Advanced Known with Dean still in the front seat. I'm not sure whether this was harder on the plane or on Dean but it did give Sal and myself the entertainment of watching him as he returned. Let's just say that if “walking in a straight line” were an Aresti figure I'd have given him a 7.0 (and that would have been generous).

On to the next part of my valuable education as the sun went down and the dinner and entertainment, organized for local

residents, began. Now I may, when questioned at some point in the past, have implied to my wife Bobbi Jo that aerobatic competitions are serious affairs contested by serious participants – athletes if you will – and that there would therefore be no revelry, partying, carousing or alcohol consumption involved. (“This isn't a rodeo” may have been my exact phrase.) Well, you live and learn, that's what I say. Always man enough to admit to my mistakes I happily proved myself wrong with a Corona and wronger with each subsequent Corona. Thank you and good night,

(Continued on page 7)





Dave Watson after flying the Advanced Known at Borrego. Is he making repairs? 59AC later pulled 6G with Martin “Need to Watch That” Price in his first primary—nice! 59AC is now in rehab.

Borrego.

Friday morning – contest day – and another of my rookie miscalculations came to light as we assembled for the 7am briefing. Borrego, of course, is in the middle of the desert and I’d checked the highs (low 90s) and packed accordingly. However, I’ve never hung out in the desert before sunrise and I didn’t bother to check the lows (bloody cold). Oops. This was where the friendly spirit of the sport kicked in, though, as Doug Jardine immediately grabbed a spare jacket from his truck and loaned it to me for the duration. Doug, it seems, has been to a contest or two before.

Other than that things were looking good. The weather forecast was more or less perfect – hot, but not scorching, with barely a breath of wind – and I was the sixth plane up behind the 5 Unlimited guys. This was a huge bonus as it gave me barely any time to get too nervous or stressed before I got up there. Bobbi Jo was there to support me and only occasionally reminded me about the rodeo comment. Sal provided some extremely valuable last-minute critiquing from the practice session. Prepare the plane, push to the start line, strap in, start up, taxi, take off, climb, switch to box frequency, hold, and the magic words...

“Martin Price, the box is yours”.



That is indescribably cool to hear for the first time. I had the box, all eyes were on me and... oh yeah, right, pay attention and fly the plane... safety check, set up, wing wags and go! I’d love to tell you how I flew the sequence but, again, I don’t really remember. It felt pretty good for a first time, though, and the scores turned out OK as well. A slap on the back from coach/aircraft owner/safety pilot Dave – presumably relieved that both wings were still on the plane and that I exited the box via the side rather than the base – and back to earth to calm down and rehydrate. One down, two to go. Volunteering kept me out of trouble for a couple of hours, as did cheering on Sal and Dean in Sportsman and Dave in Advanced, but as morning turned to afternoon the butterflies started up again as it became clear I was about to have to fly my second sequence. Or not, in fact, as a (minor) mechanical problem for the final Unlimited competitor, Ty, left me holding for rather longer than I’d expected and – more importantly – longer than I was fuelled for. Opting to skip the opportunity to demonstrate glider aerobatics and a power-out landing in the Super D I returned to earth after my desert sightseeing trip, somewhat downbeat, for a few more gallons of gas and to find out what would happen about rescheduling flight number 2.

What happened was that I got to go up at the end of the day, squeezed in after the Advanced Free. That’s right, it was my job to close out day 1 of the contest so I had to make it a good one. Loaded now with enough fuel to make it to San Diego for a burger and back and still do the sequence (I wasn’t going through that little problem again) I got up there and flew it. At the time it didn’t feel quite as good as my first sequence but, with hindsight, I think I was just rather more conscious of my mistakes. All I know is that I scored better – woohoo! Coming back down I happened to glance at the G-meter and was somewhat surprised to discover it pegged at 6G, apparently an unusual occurrence in the Primary category. I don’t think I was the only one surprised – I’m pretty certain there was an elevated eyebrow behind me – and it was quite clear by this point that there’s certainly not going to be a problem with me not flying hard enough... Back on the ground Howard Kirker took the time to compliment me personally on my loop. That kind of feedback means the world to a newbie. Thanks, Howard.

Another day done and it was time for the entire 59AC clan – pilots, spouses, kids and parents - to get together for dinner. Arriving first at the hotel restaurant I approached the unsuspecting hostess and casually enquired “Ummm, table for 13?” Such requests, when I’ve had to make them in the past, have usually earned me the kind of death-ray glare that would melt glaciers but she didn’t even bat an eyelid. They just put it together for us and a riotous evening followed, making it clear to anybody with earshot (probably several hundred yards at that point) that we were there to have fun. I believe my “rodeo” wisecrack may also have been repeated to me again as the first pitcher of Sierra Nevada arrived. I truly will regret that comment at every competition I attend.

Saturday. Oh-dark-hundred hours. I crammed down



I spent a good chunk of the afternoon broiling gently in the desert sun as SE boundary judge for Sportsman, admiring the pilots who could actually keep their entire sequence within those ridiculously tight confines and considering that, unless I want to spend the rest of my life in Primary, I'm going to have to learn to do the same. After Sportsman there were just a couple of Unlimited 4-minute Frees ("Hey, how come those guys are allowed to pull more than 6G?") and that was it, all over. It was kind of sad

as much breakfast as I could face at that time of the morning and we headed over. A veteran of one previous briefing (yesterday's) I was an old hand at this by now. Order of flight. Weather. Got it. Time to get the plane ready. With the remaining Sportsman sequences and my Primary on the schedule she was going to have to work hard. Sportsman was first up and, as I watched, it became clear that I was finding it very hard to critique the sequences effectively. Sal obligingly critiqued out loud for me but it's going to take me some time to get the hang of it. I like to think that my own mistakes are big enough that anybody can spot them easily. I'm thoughtful like that. With Sportsman done and the Unlimited Unknowns in progress it was getting close to the moment of truth. With my one remaining flight Primary was mine to lose – all I had to do was fly it. That, and try and keep it under 6G. The nerves were still there but I'd done this before and I could do it one



Dave Watson at 10,500 feet on his trip home near Big Bear. 20 kt tail winds both there and back.



more time. Not too bad once again, although my liberal interpretation of the location of the edges of the box doubtless raised a smile or two on the ground. Oh, and I only pulled 5.7G – I tried to claim it read 5.5 but was overruled from the back seat. Ahem. Need to watch that. Still, I taxied back to a cheery thumbs-up from Dean. Maybe I'd done it.

but at least it all ended in style. With the contest finished and any pretence regarding seriousness long since thrown to the wind we ordered team support driver, Bobbi Jo, to take us by the grocery store on the way back to the hotel for more beer.

After all, we needed something to tide us over by the pool for the full hour before the awards banquet. Ah, the banquet. By that point, late in the evening (close to 7pm) I was utterly exhausted. We confirmed one thing, though. I won! With a gold medal for each of the 3 flights and the trophy for 1st place Primary I think it's actually more than I've won in the rest of my life

put together and it felt good.

Overall impressions? That weekend was the most fun I've had in a long time but it wasn't just because of the flying and the win (although those were both pretty cool). I had a great time meeting and talking to the other competitors, and in particular with Dave, Dean, Sal and their families. As a first-timer the competition environment is quite intimidating – there's a lot to take in and remember, and your newly acquired skills are about to be put to the test – but with supportive people around you it's an absolute breeze to make it through and enjoy the whole event. I particularly appreciate everything Dave did for me, both before and at the competition. It's a lot of work to have two planes at a contest with 3 pilots flying one of them, especially when it involves babysitting a rookie, but he did it anyway. His reward (well, punishment, if we're being completely honest about it) is that I want to move up to Sportsman now and I'm looking for all the help I can get...

- Martin

IAC Chapter 38 Season Event Calendar

Sal Webber

NOVEMBER

- 3-5 **Tequila Cup.** Marana Airport, (AVQ) Tucson, AZ. Contest is sponsored by Chapter 62 All classes flown
- 12 **IAC Chapter 38 Monthly meeting, 3-5 pm.** Attitude Aviation, Livermore Airport (LVK). Don't miss Bill Stein.

DECEMBER

- 1-2 **Arizona State Aerobatic Championship.** Coolidge Municipal Airport (P08) AZ. Contest is sponsored by Chapter 69.

Holiday Party—TBD

JANUARY 2007

Brainstorm the design of the new Freestyles

FEBRUARY 2007

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MARCH 2007

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APRIL 2007

Flying the Maneuvers: High performance aircraft.

MAY 2007

Flying the Maneuvers: How to get the most out of 180 HP.

New Member: Patrick Carter



Patrick is originally from Arkansas but has lived here in California for the last 2 years. He is a corporate pilot and recently accepted a new job flying a Citation XLS for Aviation Consultants, Inc. in San Luis Obispo.

Patrick's airplane is a Pitts S-2B that he uses for basic aero-

batic instruction. He also looks forward to getting into the competition scene. His 1st competition was Delano. He says he joined 38 because it seemed like one of best clubs around (good choice, dude).

Welcome to Chapter 38!

What is chiefly needed is skill rather than machinery.

- Wilber Wright, 1902

Mistakes are inevitable in aviation, especially when one is still learning new things. The trick is to not make the mistake that will kill you.

- Stephen Coonts



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IAC #: _____

EAA #: _____

Certificate #: _____

EAA Expiration Date: _____

Judge: Regional National

Competition: None Basic Sportsman Intermediate Advanced Unlimited

Aircraft: _____

N #: _____

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Chapter Meeting:
Sunday November 12th, 2006, 3 pm
Attitude Aviation
Livermore Airport

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