



FLIGHTLINE



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Photo Credits: Charlie Nelson at IndianValley, photo by Kathy Nelson

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Winter Flying Rumors and Stuff

TBD

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WOR Officers

President

Eric Froelich 650-605-1996
president@wingsofrogallo.org

Vice President

Karl Allmendinger
vicepres@wingsofrogallo.org

Treasurer

Don Herrick 408-718-6527
treasurer@wingsofrogallo.org

Membership Services

Phil Hamby 510-429-1070
memberservices@wingsofrogallo.org

Secretary

Paul Clayton 408-399-5348
secretary@wingsofrogallo.org

Flight Director

Pat Denevan 408-262-1055
flightdirector@wingsofrogallo.org

HG Observer Coordinator

Stan Bohem 408-946-7328

PG Observer Coordinators

Tim Kuenster 650-938-7328

Editor

Colin Perry 650-279-2397
GoodLookingRichGuy@hotmail.com

Mt. Diablo Weather Robot
925-838-9225

Ed Levin Weather Robot
408-946-9516

Ed Levin Road Conditions
408-355-2200 - x7 - x6

WOR Business
PO Box 361885

Milpitas, CA 95036

<http://www.wingsofrogallo.org>

WOR Member Database

<http://wingsofrogallo.org/memberdb>

September 2009 Meeting Minutes

Entertainment was video showing 3D flight paths of Golden Eagle flights using Google Earth, presented by Karl Allmendinger. Karl also gave a tutorial on landing in the Mission LZ.

New Members/Guests

John Bloom, attending his second meeting.

Great Flights

Ben Dunn flew all 7 days he was at Big Spring Tx. He also flew from a launch near Wild Ass to Paso Robles, a distance of 70 miles.

There was a big group that flew Indian Valley on Labor Day Weekend.

President: Eric Froelich

WOR is planning to produce a brochure for new pilots. Eric asked for feedback. The brochure is currently a work in progress. Eric is also organizing a mentor program for WOR.

Vice President: Karl Allmendinger

Nothing to report.

Treasurer: Don Herrick

There is an item in the budget that will cover production of the new pilot brochure. The club's balances were slightly lower this month.

Flight Director: Pat Denevan

WOR members should check other pilot's stickers to verify they have the required skill level for the launches they are using at Ed Levin. There was

recently a H1 pilot who flew off the 300' launch. Another pilot flew off the 300' launch, did a 180 degree turn and crashed. Karl Allmendinger plans to contact the pilot and investigate the incident.

Membership: Phyl Hamby

We now have 357 members, with 6 applications pending.

Ed Levin: Steve Pittman

The sign at the gate may be changed to say that only participants are allowed in the landing zone. The breakdown area may be remarked.

Mission Ridge: None

There was an unofficial report that the windsock needs to be replaced.

Mount Diablo: Mark Grubbs

According to Robert Moore, the park may be closed due to the state budget crisis.

Coyote Lake: Jim Woodward

The Parks Dept is looking for Roads Dept input on site access and parking.

Goat Mountain/Wild Ass: Wayne

Michelson Wild Ass is accessible, but the launch is getting overgrown. Goat is currently closed due to a concern about asbestos.

Old Business

Mark Mullholland reported that WOR videos are on Milpitas cable channel 26 and are shown twice a week. There are also live feeds on the web.

New Business

Carmela Moreno announced that there will be a fly-in at Hull this weekend.

Don Herrick mentioned that the club has been collecting pilot data since the 1970s and has 2 large cabinets of paper records. New waivers are being scanned for electronic archiving. Don proposed disposing of the paper files. Steve Pittman pointed out that the Ed Levin site procedures call for retaining applications.

Wayne Michelson noted that the club's namesake Francis Rogallo passed away recently. He was in his 90s.

Prizes were raffled.

End of Meeting Minutes

Editor's Psycotic Rambling

This just in!! Somone found a Higgs Boson at the Mission launch, left it in the Lockbox for the owner to retrieve.

The un-official WOR 2010 Calendar is now available at the usual location. JoeBob sez "Check it out".

Your erstwile FlightLine editor was amazingly somehow NOT awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, even though he also qualifies as "Someone Who Is Not George Jr".

Somewhat Reliable Rumor has it that a certain Red-Winged HG pilot guy and a HOT young PG gal spent WAY too long in the back of his shell-covered pickup "looking for a lost jacket" at the ERLCP Impact Zone late last month.

SantaCruz Flats

by ChrisV

ARRIVAL:

Mr. Dunn and I made the 12 to 13 hour drive to Casa Grande and are now at the Francisco Grande...lots of "Grande's" in this area, but you get my drift...we stopped at Sky Harbor Airport in Phoenix to pick up James and Derreck...Wendy flew down to Sky Harbor and took the shuttle to Francisco Grande...smart. We're all here now and I'm looking forward to the practice day tomorrow. The weather is looking extremely hot the next few days, so lots of water and trying to stay cool...no pictures yet, but will be working on that, hopefully from the air.

PRACTICE DAY:

Saturday, after things got rolling, we all got in one or a few practice tows. The lift was bubbly, broken, and had some drift to it with a definite NW component at about 3800 feet. I had a good time working what I could in a couple gaggles and got the "first tow" jitters behind me...time to just concentrate on flying and staying cool. After yesterday's flight we cooled off in the pool, then finished up the meet paperwork and downloaded our waypoints, etc. Today, Monday, and Tuesday, the temps are suppose to be in the 100 range, then "cooling off" to 97 or thereabouts by Wednesday.

We had a spectacular dust storm roll through here within about 1 hour of the last pilot landing. I had my glider secured by then, so no worries, but had never witnessed a dust storm...they're incredible and ominous at the same time...I felt compelled to just stand and look at the wall of dust roll toward us...I would say the winds generated were in the mid- twenties max, but am glad we were not driving on the roads...

Today is the first official day of the comp with a pilot's meeting at 9:30 this morning... Practice day flight time: 50 minutes

DAY ONE OF THE MEET:

Day one started with some challenging conditions that tested my thermaling skills. I had a nice tow up to a thermal where others were gagging and pinned off at that point. Brian Foster, Luc, a few others, and I worked the broken lift. Things were looking good...then...then...I managed to loose track of the thermal. I was able to find another broken thermal only to loose track of

where the hell that was going as well...rough day in the air but a lot is being learned...I landed just east of the hotel for a rapid pick-up by Miss Wendy. She and I then chased after Brian who was able to make it to the first waypoint then it was on to pick up Alex Cuddy and Ben Dunn. Alex and Ben had good days in the air.

There are six more days left to fly, so I'm looking forward to improving upon my first day results at the comp... Flight time: 30 minutes

DAY TWO OF THE MEET:

Day two was a lesson in tenacity... The dusties were rolling through the launch area early on, but pilots were not staying up with many, including myself, having to relaunch (relight) once, twice, and in some cases three times. My first tow up was in very smooth conditions. When I released, there was no lift whatsoever to be found...I might as well have been practicing aerobatics the air was that smooth...so, I landed, reset my instruments and went for a second try at it. Ben Dunn, Wayne Michelson, and Alex Cuddy were in the same boat.

The air felt more active on the second tow and I released near a small gaggle of pilots working a thermal to the south of the launch area...this was our silver platter out and on course.

Alex and I continued to work the lift out on course to the first waypoint...in between launch and the first waypoint, there was a few good thermals that got us higher toward our first turnpoint. This is why I came to Santa Cruz Flats! There is nothing better than flying with someone you know, communicating on the radio, and navigating along course. Alex was a big help this flight.

I found a nice smooth thermal right above the first waypoint and worked that for about 15 minutes or so, maybe less. Alex was still flying with me...looking up, I noticed Wayne was there, also. We pulled on the VG and headed on east toward waypoint number two. The glide on my T2, given the drag of my harness did well, and I was able to keep up with Alex's total race setup for the most part lagging behind slightly. Along course we hunted for more lift. I found a dusty off to my left, but ignored it, opting for anticipated lift over a cattle farm instead...sure enough, just east and downwind of the farm, a nice smooth thermal brought me up to about 7K or so and I continued on. Alex was a little lower than

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me (a first!) and apparently found a boomer that got him high enough to pretty much go on glide to the second waypoint. I should have stayed around and worked the lift I had longer as I was a bit low to compensate for the venturi that existed crossing I10 to Houser. I could feel the glider sinking out...think crossing Ram's Horn Canyon at King low, but far less dangerous...any pilot who has done that will know what I'm talking about.

I ended up landing short of Houser (2nd waypoint), but had a sweet landing in a freshly plowed field with bowling ball sized clumps of dirt...glad I wear boots...a no step landing had to happen and it did.

Overall, this was one of my best flights...I was extremely happy with my decision making, sans leaving too low over toward Houser. Other than that I cannot complain. Mr. Foster flew extremely well on Day 2 and made the 2nd waypoint (Houser)...He and his dad, Bill, picked me up with a nice cold beer and water.

Today (Day 3) the winds are pretty strong already, and right now, it is not flyable...we'll see what is called. Flight time: 1 hour, 33 minutes

DAY THREE OF THE MEET:

High winds prevented us from flying on Day 3 here at Casa Grande...the decision was made a little after noon to call off the task, so Wendy and I headed down to [Saguaro National Park](#) for a little road trip. I'd have to use the word formidable to describe this area...

Some thoughts on Monday's flight... From the looks of things, it appears I missed the 1st waypoint by a few meters, thus causing lesser points in my favor. I'm not really here to earn points, but to learn. However, the more points one earns, the more he begins to *like* earning points.

Therefore, when points are missed, one begins to realize the value in navigation and using his GPS for his benefit, that being tagging waypoints and getting points. Fortunately, I'm not here to earn points, though...just to learn. I am learning how to use my GPS and directional capabilities of my vario, however.

DAY FOUR OF THE MEET:

Day four winds were gusting up near 30 mph, so the task was cancelled. Many of the pilots opted to go to Phoenix for some indoor go-carting, I believe. Wendy and I headed south to Tucson, stopped at a triathlon

SantaCruzFlats continued...

then had launch at a really good Mexican restaurant, Cafe Poca Cosa, in downtown Tuscon.

On the way back we stopped at the Casa Grande Humane Society to check out their pet cemetery...there is a subtle irony that goes with having a pet cemetery behind a local Humane Society and I'll just leave it at that...

Thursday, Friday, and Saturday the winds are supposed to subside and be from the northeast, so it'll be interesting to see what tasks are called. I'm having a great time here and learning a lot about flatland thermal flying. This meet, combined with my usual inland mountain and coastal flying, will be some added tools in the toolbox of flying skills. Now that I know how to use the competition route function of my vario, I should be better able to find my way along course rather than my usual seat-of-the-pants approach.

Another aspect of this meet that I'm enjoying is the towing. I used to not like aerotowing but am more comfortable each time I get towed up now. I'm still apprehensive as there is alot that can go wrong in a short period of time, especially the first few seconds after we release from the cart. All you have to do is fly the glider, though...pretty simple.

Time for a beer...more later.

DAY FIVE OF THE MEET:

The winds had subsided, so we were able to fly again, but at a different location...a small airstrip called Phoenix Regional Airport. The task called was Mobile to Gila Bend with an entry cylinder around Mobile.

I was not in a hurry to get up in the air yesterday as a few people were sinking out and having to relaunch. My tow up was a bit squirrely, but I was able to keep myself behind the tug and pinned off near a thermal that required me to backtrack and find. I bobbed around in that for a bit, but found it to be a bit weak. Brian Foster had just pinned off after his second tow at about the same time. I could hear others on our same frequency moving on to the first waypoint.

The lift was weak where I was, but there were some dust devils out within gliding distance...I went for the largest dusty in my sights. As I was approaching, I could see a smaller dusty developing nearby and positioned myself right in the middle of the two. At 500 AGL, I found the lift off the dusties, dumped my VG, and cranked up for what would my best climb of the day.

The drift of that thermal was taking me over a racetrack south of Maricopa where another thermal was found. Scot Huber was there also and another pilot as we all worked that lift. I should have been able to get higher, but topped out at about 6200', then went on glide. I had the competition route working well on my vario and had a clear direction to the first waypoint, Mobile. As I headed out on glide, I could see Brian Foster low over the racetrack. He was setting up his approach to land...one of those days. I was not too far from landing, as well. At about the 10km mark, I could not find a thing and was on the ground at 11.9km.

Currently, I'm holding steady onto last place in this meet...the irony is that I'm having some of my best flights. Flat land flying is challenging to say the least. Flying with my fellow pilots can't be beat here...Wendy is having a great time, too...two more days of flying, then the drive home on Sunday with Mr. Dunn and Jamie Sheldon. Ben will remain bound and gagged in the rear seat of my truck and will not be allowed to touch the radio as always...

Today (Friday) winds are similar to yesterday...light and from the NNE...the task called today may be similar to yesterday...we'll see. Flight time: 53 minutes

DAY SIX OF THE MEET:

While on the cart getting ready for my tow, I looked over at the temperature guage on my vario...111 degrees. I needed to get in the air where it was 20 degrees cooler...

Day 6 brought the expected NE winds, light. A 92km triangle was called taking us from the Francisco Grande start area to Estrella, on to the I8 / Hwy 84 intersection, then back to the hotel. I was one of the last few to be towed as the start line grew quickly before I was ready...no worries, although I would have benefitted from an earlier start...more about that later.

First, it was sad to see Brian Foster's mishap off tow yesterday. His weaklink broke right off the cart and he got caught in the tug's prop wash resulting in a hard landing...broken downtube, torn sail, two broken battens, and covered in dust. Brian was OK, but needed to gather his wits alone for a while. I felt bad for him, but he's OK now and may have his glider pieced together for today, the last day of the meet. This is why we wear jeans and boots here, although many wear shorts and light duty shoes for some reason. Brian would have had some serious abrasions without

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proper gear...a glider can always be repaired and replaced...the same is not true for a good flying buddy.

Back to my flight...my tow went really well...smooth air through out, which is not good. I had a feeling things were beginning to mellow out a bit over the start area and I was right. I pinned off in lift, though, before being waved off by the tug pilot...this was a good call as I was able to stay in the thermal to get up. I soon caught up with another gaggle of pilots to the north of the start area. On glide I came in low under the gaggle...really low. I could see Alex was in the same boat. The lift was intermittent, but I managed to eek out a bubble here and there for the boomer that would take me up to 6800', still not as high as others, but high enough for me to decide to go on glide to what I hoped to be the first waypoint...not so.

My goal was to reach a cluster of dust devils in a field a few kilometers away, get high, and move on from there. I made the field with plenty of altitude, but by then, the dusties were dissipating, and I was groveling for whatever I could...300-500 feet AGL is where I groveled for well over a 1/2 hour working all I could. I could tell things were really starting to break up and settle down. Finally, I had to decide to land as I was too low to safely turn in the minimal lift that was available. I managed to find what appeared to be a former sod farm to land and enjoyed the smooth surface for my slightly cross-downwind landing...I managed to keep my feet below me, but really had to run it out with a skidding stop at the end.

I honestly thought I had the first waypoint on this flight. My decision-making was going well...I was flying well, but again, I could only get so far along the day...numerous others made it to goal and some came in just short of goal including Ben, Wayne, Alex, Bruce, and James. They flew well, though. As a side note, I have lost my hold on last place and am now 2nd to last, an improvement!

When I take all my flights out of the context of this meet, and forget about the scores associated with these flights, they are all personal best experiences. I love flying XC and the decision-making that goes with that, then finding a safe landing area toward the end of the flight. Meets like this will continue to provide opportunity for flights I normally would not have with recreational flying. Speaking with Brian last evening, we both agreed this type of aerotow comp is far less

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the decision-making that goes with that, then finding a safe landing area toward the end of the flight. Meets like this will continue to provide opportunity for flights I normally would not have with recreational flying. Speaking with Brian last evening, we both agreed this type of aerotow comp is far less stressful, both for drivers and pilots. The air is less rowdy, one can concentrate more on flying rather than surviving, and the ability to readily relaunch in the event of a sinkout is golden.

Today, similar winds as yesterday...light and from the NNE, and hot, with temps in the low 100's. Max lift will be from noon to about 2pm or 3pm, then dying down again toward 4pm. I'll need to get in the air early if I plan on flying far today...

That Funston cool air will feel nice when we get home... Flight time: 2 hours

LAST DAY OF THE MEET, DAY SEVEN:

Day 7 was disappointing for me personally as I barely made it out of the start cylinder before getting drilled...again. I was doing well after a successful tow working some lift with Alex, Ben, and Patrick, then lost drift of the thermal we were working.

I tried for all it was worth to position myself beneath another gaggle circling above only to sink out. I'm not going to beat myself up anymore on this flight and am looking forward to improving upon what I've already got and moving on. Santa Cruz Flats has been a good lesson in the amount of work I need to do to ultimately do well in competitions and simply become a more proficient pilot.

Brian, Alex, Ben, and James all had superb flights making it just past the second waypoint on Saturday. Brian came back after his Friday tow mishap and smoked on his repaired glider...that was good to see.

Wendy had a great time here and that is what is most important. She is an excellent driver and support for these comps and I'm extremely lucky / grateful for that!

It is now time for the long drive home, then back to work on Monday and flying our local sites. Fly Safe! Chris Valley

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The WindGod's payback to RoyS for his epic flight at Mission

Wings of Rogallo
P.O. Box 361885
Milpitas, CA 95036-1885

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To: