

# **SPORT** *Aerobatics*

October 2014

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE of the INTERNATIONAL AEROBATIC CLUB



- A P-51 in the Box?
- Airsickness
- Pitts Checkout



# 2015 Ford F-150

## The Future of Tough

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*In the recent issues of our beloved publication there have been some claims about "the best aerobatic box," and my intent is to fuel that fire. Of course there's a certain amount of hometown (or is it home chapter?) pride regarding our contests. In reality, all of the local color is generated by people, regardless of the location.*

—Aaron McCartan

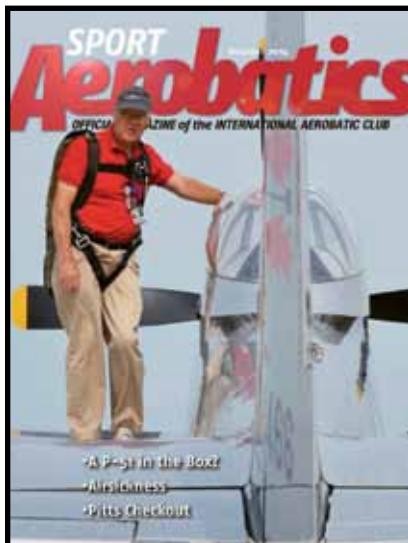
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Harry Barr with  
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**REGGIE PAULK**

COMMENTARY / EDITOR'S LOG

## AirVenture 2014

### A photo essay and more

Why is there a P-51 on the cover of *Sport Aerobatics* magazine? To answer that question, you'll need to read Aaron McCartan's story about the Doug Yost Challenge in this month's issue. I think you'll be as dumbfounded as I am at what two pilots were able to accomplish with the nearly 80-year-old fighter.

**"I think you'll be as dumbfounded as I am at what two pilots were able to accomplish with the nearly 80-year-old fighter."**

Jonathan Apfelbaum takes us air show center at Oshkosh and shares his viewpoint of the show through both his lens and his pen. I think the main theme to take away from his prose is that the people are what keep you coming back year after year. I have to agree with that assessment. After seven trips to AirVenture, I get excited when I think of all the people who've become friends over the years. I think the saying is, "You come for the airplanes, but you come back for the people." So true.

Our own Greg Koontz won this year's Bill Barber Award for Showmanship, and I for one would like to congratulate him on his effort. Greg's name now resides among air show greats such as Bob Hoover, Leo Loudenslager and Patty Wagstaff. Greg flies impressive routines in his new Extreme Decathlon as well as a J-3 Cub. It's always fun to see him up there wringing out an airplane known best for Sportsman-level competition.

You'll notice we've spotlighted a flight school in this issue—Harvey & Rihn Aviation. Debby Rihn-Harvey has been advertising in these pages for years, making her a major contributor to both the IAC and the sport of aerobatics. We felt it was time to start highlighting those advertisers who've been so dedicated to the sport in general and the IAC in particular. Debby has supported the IAC in numerous other ways as well. Thank you, Debby!

As I write this, Nationals is just a couple of days away. I'll be there covering the action, and hope to bring you coverage befitting the competition. Until next time, have fun daydreaming inverted. **IAC**

Please submit news, comments, articles, or suggestions to: [reggie.paulk@gmail.com](mailto:reggie.paulk@gmail.com)



## MIKE HEUER

COMMENTARY / IAC PRESIDENT, IAC 4

Please send your comments, questions, or suggestions to: [mike@mheuer.com](mailto:mike@mheuer.com)

# A menu of choices

Last month I wrote about how we will bring a strong focus to all of IAC's programs and activities in the months ahead with an eye to improving membership services. This must be the passion and commitment of every IAC officer, director, and committee chairman—to reach out to you and find how we might do our jobs better and to deliver more for your membership dollars.

In the membership survey mentioned last month, I have been impressed with the quality of the responses we have received. All of these ideas will be collated into a document for presentation to the IAC board of directors when it meets in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, on November 12 and 13. The ideas, opinions, views, and proposals ran the full gamut from our emphasis on competition, to the need for more "grassroots" activities, more support for our chapters, how we might increase our education programs, and varying opinions on our involvement in international aerobatic activities. I have read all the e-mails and letters carefully and really appreciated the time that so many took to send them along to us. It is our responsibility to consider all the feedback we receive and go from there—I make the pledge to you to do so.

That said, it reminded me of something I have frequently pointed out to friends. The IAC is a very diverse organization with many activities and programs and the incredible asset of a highly skilled, experienced, and smart membership. We have a lot of successful people from all sorts of backgrounds in our midst, and I have always been impressed with them and honored to work alongside

them. I would ask all of you to think about how much the IAC and sport aerobatics offers you as a member.

If you are a new or recent member and are interested in learning about aerobatics, you have articles in past and current issues of *Sport Aerobatics* to read and study, the possibility of joining a chapter in many parts of the country and to learn from experienced members, and to attend chapter practice sessions, judges schools, competitions, seminars, and meetings—to network with those who have been doing this kind of flying for a very long time. You can also consult our extensive list of aerobatic schools. Most members will welcome you with open arms. For any additional help, I invite you to write or call me, and I will help get you on track.

If you have aerobatic training under your belt, you can move on to our IAC Achievement Awards program. Details of the program can be found on our website ([www.IAC.org](http://www.IAC.org)) where you can register as a member and have access to all of the pages, documents, and information we have on the site. Achievement Awards have been a part of IAC's array of programs since 1971, and hundreds of pilots have flown and qualified for both Smooth and Stars awards in the decades since it was formed. I invite you to do so—our Achievement Awards chairman, Lorrie Penner, would be delighted to hear from you. Flying for the awards is often done at chapter activities, but if not, Lorrie can put you in touch with someone who can sign you off for a Smooth award.

Another choice on the menu is chapter educational activities. As I mentioned, many chapters host judges schools in the winter months.

If you haven't had one recently or would like to schedule one in the coming months, be sure to contact our Judges chairman, Greg Dungan. His contact information can be found on the IAC website. Greg will help you organize a school in your area. We have an excellent cadre of instructors and have received positive feedback on the schools for many years. The syllabus is being constantly updated and improved. I also encourage chapters to think about hosting other educational seminars. Many of these have been run in the past and featured in *Sport Aerobatics*. They are often most effective when chapters combine forces with EAA chapters or other aviation organizations in their area. I encourage chapters to contact others in your area for help and support. You might be surprised at the enthusiasm this can generate, and we all need to be working together.

Finally, for those seriously interested in competition, our history and expertise is well-known and observed across the country every competition season. Contests are organized and held during a long season that starts early in the year and runs through the fall. They offer pilots the opportunity to have their skills evaluated by certified judges and to compete against fellow pilots for awards and recognition. Competition has a way of focusing all of us on trying to achieve perfection, and what it has done in the way of developing pilot skills as well as new aerobatic designs has been dramatic since IAC's foundation. We have seen an enormous amount of development in aircraft these last few decades, though unfor-

*continued on page 27*

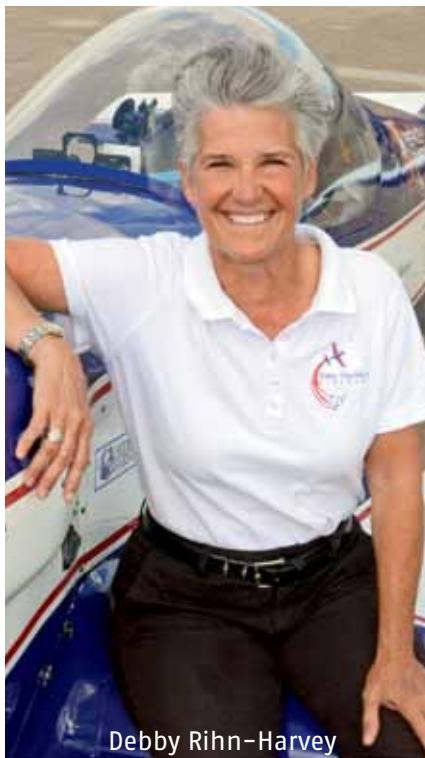
# Harvey & Rihn Aviation

So who is Debby? Well, here's what her website says:

Debby Rihn-Harvey is one of the highest ranked aerobatics competitors in the United States. In 2011, she won the Betty Skelton "First Lady of Aerobatics" Trophy, making her the highest scoring female competitor for the thirteenth time. Rihn-Harvey is also the longest standing member of the U.S. Unlimited Aerobatics Team, qualifying to represent the U.S. fifteen times in World Aerobatic Championships in North America and Europe. In world competition, Rihn-Harvey has been a Gold Medalist as well as holding many regional titles. As a tribute to her many accomplishments, she was inducted into the Texas Aviation Hall of Fame in 2003, the IAC-International Aerobatics Hall of Fame in 2007, she received the Lloyd P. Nolen Lifetime Achievement Award in 2010, and the International Ninety-Nine's Award of Achievement for Contributions to Aviation in 2012.

This native Nebraskan is the third generation of aviators in her family. Her grandfather, Roy Furstenberg, manufactured the Overland Sport Aircraft in Omaha in the 1920's, while her father, Jack Furstenberg, began teaching her to fly in her teens.

Rihn-Harvey is a captain for Southwest Airlines. Besides the many hours of practice it takes for competition and air show flying, she also manages a flight school and fixed-base operation at La Porte Municipal Airport, Harvey & Rihn Aviation. The aerobatics school attracts pilots from around the world. Rihn-Harvey is also an Aerobatic Competency Evaluator (ACE) for the International Council of Airshows and an FAA Designated



Debby Rihn-Harvey

**For years, she's been  
a loyal supporter  
of the IAC—running  
an ad for her flight  
school, Harvey & Rihn  
Aviation in La Porte,  
TX—in these pages.**

Flight Examiner (DE) who administers flight exams for Private Pilot through Airline Transport Pilot certificates. Harvey & Rihn Aviation doesn't just offer aerobatics. MEI Jason Wilson and CFII Vicente Garza work alongside Debby to provide everything from basic to tailwheel, multi-engine, and aerobatic flight training in a variety of aircraft. Depending on your needs, you can fly anything from a Cessna

152 to a Citabria or Decathlon.

But if you're going to fly with Debby, it would be a shame not to go upside down with her, wouldn't it? From her website:

Carelessness and overconfidence are usually more dangerous than deliberately accepted risks.—Wilbur Wright, 1901

Harvey & Rihn Aviation offers a wide range of aerobatic training in a variety of aircraft.

Our aerobatic course offerings include:

**Basic Aerobic Course:** Unlike some other aerobatic training schools, all of our aerobatic instruction is taught to competition-level standards.

This is an introduction to basic precision aerobatics. Included in the course are loops, rolls (barrel, snap, slow and point), spins (upright and inverted), hammerhead stalls, Cuban 8s, Immelmans, and inverted flight. At the completion of the course the pilot has the ability to safely combine maneuvers into a prescribed sequence, as one would see in entry level aerobatic competition. Time required to complete the course will vary from seven to 10 hours depending on the pilot's experience.

**Advanced Aerobic Course:** For the serious aerobatic pilot who wants to get involved beyond the basics and get into inverted, vertical and negative g maneuvers. This course is tailored to each pilot depending upon the pilot's training objectives. Because students have different backgrounds and flight experience, the time required to complete each course may vary. We teach at individualized pace for each student. If you'd like to learn more, visit <http://HarveyRihn.com/index.html>, or call 281-471-1675. **IAC**

# Minutes of the IAC Annual Membership Meeting

BY LYNN BOWES,  
SECRETARY

Oshkosh, Wisconsin

1 August 2014

The annual membership meeting was called to order by President Doug Sowder at 6:30 p.m. in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. This open annual membership meeting was attended by approximately 150 IAC members and guests including Vice President Mike Heuer, Secretary Jim Ward, Treasurer Bob Hart, Board Members Lynn Bowes, Debby Rihn-Harvey, Vicky Benzing, and IAC Manager Trish Deimer Steineke. President Sowder called the meeting to order, and no roll was called.

## General Business

Mr. Sowder opened the discussion by welcoming all IAC members and guests. Announcements included thanking outgoing officers and board members for their contributions. President Sowder announced the winners of the IAC nonflying awards and introduced for personal recognition those who were present.

Results of the general election were presented by Mr. Sowder:

Total votes submitted 281 (most by electronic website voting)

President	Mike Heuer	242 votes received elected
Secretary	Lynn Bowes	256 votes received elected
Board member	Debby Rihn-Harvey	184 votes received elected
Board member	Doug Lovell	119 votes received elected
Board member	Rob Holland	169 votes received elected
	Bruce Ballew	93 votes received not elected
	Marty Flournoy	84 votes received not elected
	John Smutny	77 votes received not elected
	Gray Brandt	65 votes received not elected

Mr. Sowder congratulated all newly elected officers and board members and turned the meeting over to President Mike Heuer who thanked all for attending, thanked outgoing President Sowder and all board members for their service to the IAC, and expressed his prospects for the future direction of the IAC. Mr. Bob Hart came forward to thank Doug Sowder for his service to the IAC. There came a general motion to adjourn for supper, which was seconded by a verbal "aye" from those present. The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:00 p.m. CDT.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Bowes  
Secretary

IAC

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**YOUR COCKPIT  
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# Greg Koontz Receives Bill Barber Award

## FOR SHOWMANSHIP



**GREG KOONTZ HAS BEEN** named the recipient of this year's Bill Barber Award for Showmanship, according to World Airshow News, and was presented with the award in front of his peers at EAA AirVenture Oshkosh on Tuesday, July 29, at Theater in the Woods.

Koontz is known throughout North America and parts of Latin America as the foremost authority on American Champion Super Decathlon aircraft. His aerobatic routines in both the Super Decathlon and the new Xtreme Decathlon have been featured at air shows from coast to coast and internationally, and culminate with an inverted ribbon cut in a stock aerobatic training airplane.

His comedy act—The Alabama Boys—features Greg as "Clem Cleaver," who steals a 1946 Piper J-3 Cub and lands it on top of his pickup truck.

In 1969 and still in high school, Koontz learned to fly and got his start in air shows at age 20 with Colonel Moser's Flying Circus in St. Augustine, Florida. While with Moser's flying circus, he began perfecting the comedy act, the truck-top landing, and began performing low-level aerobatics in the Great Lakes and the Decathlon. Greg stayed with the flying circus until 1981 when he began pursuing a corporate flying career.

Koontz flew corporate jets in Alabama while flying air shows part-time. Today he is a full-time air show performer and teaches basic aerobatics at the flight school/bed and breakfast, called Sky Country Lodge, that he runs with his wife, Cora.

Koontz is a former chairman of the ICAS Aerobatic Competency Evaluation Committee, holds an unlimited aerobatic waiver, and is a NAFI Master Instructor-Aerobatic.

The Bill Barber Award for Showmanship dates back to 1986 and is awarded to air show performers or teams that have demonstrated great skill and showmanship. The award is presented annually by World Airshow News and the friends and family of the late Bill Barber.

IAC

### Past Bill Barber Award Winners

- 2013 Skip Stewart
- 2012 Matt Younkin
- 2011 Rich & Dee Gibson
- 2010 Steve Oliver & Suzanne Asbury-Oliver
- 2009 Michael Goulian
- 2008 Bud Granley
- 2007 Dacy Family Airshow Team
- 2006 Danny Clisham
- 2005 Pietsch Airshows
- 2004 Bobby Younkin
- 2003 Jim LeRoy
- 2002 AeroShell Aerobatic Team
- 2001 Northern Lights Aerobatic Team
- 2000 John Mohr
- 1999 Dan Buchanan
- 1998 Patty Wagstaff
- 1997 Gene Soucy & Teresa Stokes
- 1996 Wayne Handley
- 1995 Bob Hoover
- 1994 Bob & Annette Hosking
- 1993 Red Baron Stearman Squadron
- 1992 Sean D. Tucker
- 1991 Julie Clark
- 1990 Leo Loudenlager
- 1989 Jimmy Franklin
- 1988 No Award
- 1987 The French Connection
- 1986 Eagles Aerobatic Flight Team

# Dealing With Airsickness

## Not a helpful sensation

BY STEVE JOHNSON  
IAC SAFETY CHAIR

A while back there was a thread on the IAC Exploder about airsickness, with several different approaches and potential cures mentioned. While I can't provide any "silver bullets" to cure airsickness, the Exploder information and current research does state that we can alleviate or, at least, reduce the effects of airsickness on our passengers and students. This information may help some of your first time passengers or students.

According to Wikipedia(1), "Airsickness is a sensation which is induced by air travel. It is a specific form of motion sickness, and is considered a normal response in healthy individuals. Airsickness occurs when the central nervous system receives conflicting messages from the body (including the inner ear, eyes and muscles) affecting balance and equilibrium. The inner ear is particularly important in the maintenance of balance and equilibrium because it contains sensors for both angular (rotational) and linear motion. Airsickness is usually a combination of spatial disorientation, nausea and vomiting."

During flight, and especially aerobatics, our inner ears can "sense" certain motions that cannot be confirmed with our eyes or other senses. These conflicts of our senses cause the symptoms of airsickness. Only by desensitizing our inner ears and other senses may we overcome these symptoms. Personally, I find that my students become best desensitized to airsickness when they make several short aerobatic flights over a short time frame, generally three to four flights over three to four

weeks eliminates or reduces airsickness issues. As others noted on the Exploder, they found the same results; that controlled increased exposure to unusual attitudes decreases the symptoms of airsickness over time.

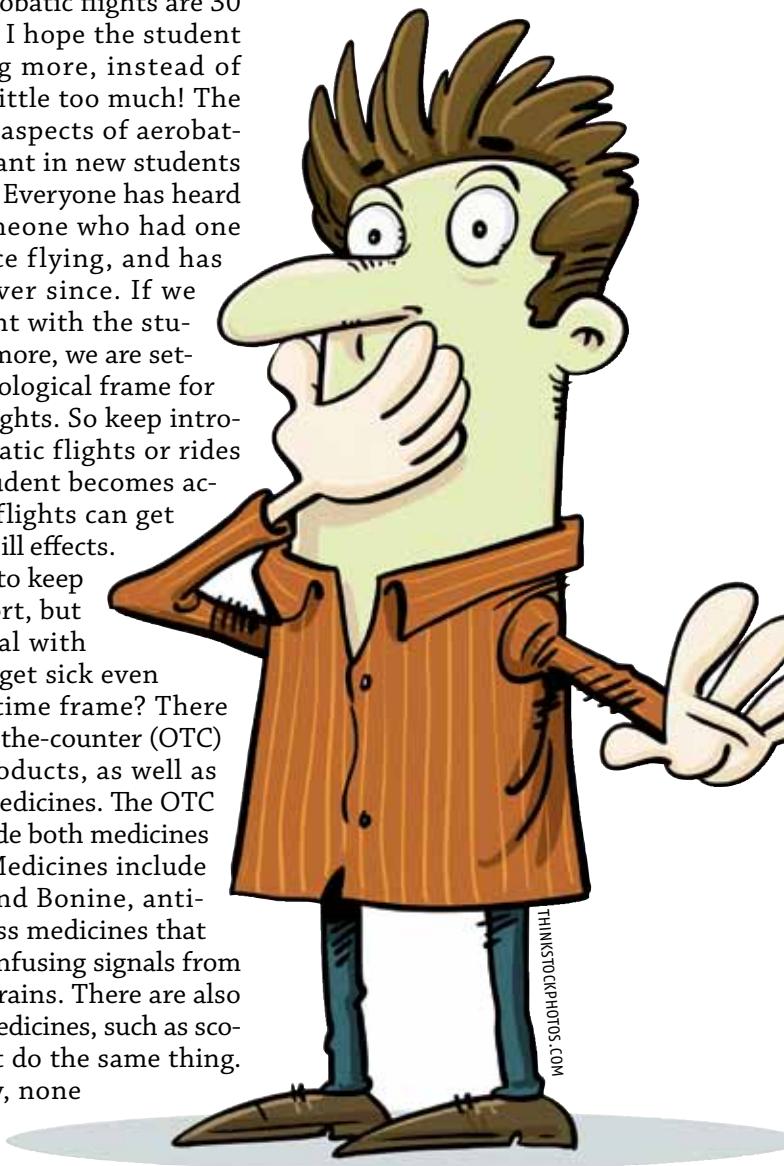
The controlled exposures should be relatively short-term. My introductory aerobatic flights are 30 minutes long. I hope the student lands wanting more, instead of having had a little too much! The psychological aspects of aerobatics are important in new students or passengers. Everyone has heard stories of someone who had one bad experience flying, and has been afraid ever since. If we can end a flight with the student wanting more, we are setting the psychological frame for good future flights. So keep introductory aerobatic flights or rides short. As a student becomes acclimated, the flights can get longer with no ill effects.

So we want to keep the flights short, but how do we deal with students who get sick even in that short time frame? There are many over-the-counter (OTC) preventive products, as well as prescription medicines. The OTC remedies include both medicines and devices. Medicines include Dramamine and Bonine, anti-motion sickness medicines that prevent the confusing signals from reaching our brains. There are also prescription medicines, such as scopolamine, that do the same thing. Unfortunately, none of the OTC or prescrip-

tion drugs are legal for use by pilots when flying (on page 27).

Natural remedies include wristbands and non-drug remedies, such as ginger. The ginger is a natural anti-emetic, as are bagels, which are thought to provide some anti-

*continued on page 27*



# P-51 in the Box: A First Time for Everything



Jessy Panzer after her first Mustang solo.

# Review of the 2014 Doug Yost Challenge, Spencer, Iowa

BY AARON McCARTAN

PHOTOS COURTESY CHAPTER 78

**O**nce in a while we attend a contest where we see a series of firsts. The variety of firsts we experience will enrich the experience. It may be your first time making a top three finish, first time as a competitor/judge/volunteer, or the many introductions we make with fellow aviation enthusiasts. These and the bonds formed as we collectively venture forth on our journey to aerobatic mastery tend to forge lifelong friendships and fantastic memories. Sometimes a seasoned member of our club will encounter a new experience that reinvigorates the desire or increases the “fun factor” of our events.

Years ago Chapter 78 of the International Aerobatic Club (IAC) opted to move contest venues to Spencer, Iowa. It's a great airport for such activity with large hangars, full-service FBOs, maintenance, avionics shops, and a town with sufficient infrastructure to support the visitors. Joke about picking a (not-so) tropical climate in a (definitely not) exotic destination such as Iowa, but the flying here is really good. Flat terrain, section lines like grid paper all the way to the horizon, winds constantly varying, and a multitude of weather extremes that provide a challenge. I'll insert the old cliché reference to Field of Dreams. “If you build it, they will come . . .”





The bonds formed as we collectively venture forth on our journey to aerobatic mastery tend to forge life-long friendships and fantastic memories.





UND Extra 300L  
(Yeah—they've got  
two Super-D's and  
an Extra now!)

The 2014 Doug Yost Challenge aerobatic competition kicked off in July. For the sixth consecutive year, we “built it,” and the colorful characters arrived just as expected. A few first-time events, some large and some small, occurred during our contest. I was called upon to provide services as the chief judge and would do so for all categories—a first for me.

One of my fellow competitors and longtime friends had traded off aircraft in recent years but had yet to compete. Mr. Dick Swanson was the gentleman who encouraged me to get active with the IAC and helped me select my first aerobatic airplane, a Pitts S-1 similar to his own. Recently he opted to trade



his Pitts for a Super Decathlon in an effort to make the dream of aerobatics possible for his daughter, Sara. For Dick it was a first time competing in his Super-D; for Sara it was a rapid learning curve, which she handled gracefully, as the big step to earning the title of aerobatic competitor. Sara has done many things in aviation and has earned the

position of operations supervisor at the Des Moines International Airport, a pretty impressive title in itself. After years of various aviation endeavors, she opted to compete. That's a tremendous step that many of us have taken and many more should.

On the first day of our contest, Chapter 78 received a late registration from



Jessy Panzer taxiing out under the supervision of Harry Barr.

For the sixth consecutive year we “built it,” and the colorful characters arrived just as expected.



Pilot Rosemary Coe (green hair) ready for flight. Starter (red shirt) and new member of Chapter 78, Ryan Flicek.



Klaus Mueller (Advanced) in his Yak 55M.



Grant Nielsen in his modified Pitts S-1.

two pilots who arrived in a very unique aircraft. A longtime competitor, air show pilot, and all-around generous fellow, Harry Barr of Nebraska arrived in his P-51D Mustang. Along with Harry was Jessy Panzer, U.S. Advanced Team alumnus, with countless qualifications of her own. Both Harry and Jessy were to fly the P-51 in Primary category. If this doesn't count as "cool factor," nothing does. Based upon an appointment elsewhere, Harry and Jessy requested we fly as early as possible. We decided to have them fly first and fifth in the rotation, respectively, and each pilot would complete their three flights during their one time in the box.

The contest went underway, which put Harry up first. My first experience as chief judge was enjoying the performance of a truly iconic American fighting machine. Usual attendees to our contest are the University of North Dakota (UND) aerobatic team. For the first-year team members, the Super Decathlon is a new reference in performance and maneuverability. Now they had the treat of a 12-cylinder fighting machine making much larger looping radii and some really neat noise as a comparison. Speaking of performance, I'd like to state for the record that there were no delays based upon the Mustang climbing to starting altitude. Upon completion of the flights for both Harry and Jessy, the score sheets for flights two and three were held until the subsequent competitors in the category completed their own rotations. We thanked both Harry and Jessy for the show—it was truly some-

Pilot Patrick Mills with coach Jon Sepulveda as safety pilot.



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...I had to dead stick my Pitts in and an old timer said "Nice save. Someone taught you well." Yes they did! Thanks, Budd. -Craig H.

My insurance company covered me, a low-time, low-tailwheel-time pilot in a single-hole Pitts largely because I went to Budd for my training. -Tom P

... the engine failed at low altitude and the accident investigators said that my fundamentals saved me. Thanks my friend. -Maynard H.

[www.airbum.com](http://www.airbum.com)



Mike Lents (coach) gives a thumbs up with pilot AJ Volberding expressing . . . excitement?



Jon Vanderhoof (Intermediate) in his S-2A.



Left side, back to front: Rosemary Coe, Greg Gilmer, Patrick Mills, AJ Volberding. Right side, back to front: Amelia Gagnon, Jon Sepulveda, Wolfgang Brink, Jen Slack and Alexander Sachs. Photo by teammate William Sullivan.



From left: Mike Lents, Jen Slack, William Sullivan, Alexander Sachs, Greg Gilmer, Patrick Mills, Amelia Gagnon, Wolfgang Brink, Jon Sepulveda. Photo by Rosemary Coe.

thing to see! For those who missed it, our magazine and newsletter editor, Reggie Paultk, included a link to this video in the August *In the Loop* electronic magazine. It can be found on YouTube as well.

As the flights continued, some weather was encountered. The upper Midwest is notorious for rapid changes in weather and rather violent extremes. We were fortunate for only a minor delay and managed to get two flights for all categories during the first day. With our weather, the ceilings came down for a while. When the clouds lifted but didn't completely vacate the box, the officials gathered all of the pilots and had an informal discussion. One of the pilots who voiced concern was our first-time competitor, Sara. The concern was for safety without full altitude of the box. During the discussion one of the UND coaches, Jon Sepulveda, offered to safety pilot for Sara so she could get her flight without compromise. This is a true testament to the character of the coaches and students at UND, a true feat of sportsmanship.

The second day was without issue. Weather was fine, the rotations ran smoothly, and the categories completed without issue. One minor mechanical issue was experienced by an Intermediate pilot. Several people volunteered suggestions, and he was back in the air promptly. As the contest was cleaned up and scores were tallied, it turned out that the Mustang had not only won World War II, but also the two top spots in Primary at our contest! A few efforts were made to contact Harry and Jessy, and the response was very generous. They opted to fly for the patch only and let the other pilots in Primary collect their awards.

In total we had a gathering of 25 pilots from across the upper Midwest. If my math is correct, pilots hailing from seven states were in attendance. Two invaded with a fighter plane. Many of our members contributed to make this event possible. Here's the shameless plug: Respectfully, the location and the diverse attendees make this the best aerobatic box in the United States. There, I said it.

IAC

# Through My Lens

EAA AirVenture 2014



Photos and article by  
Jonathan Apfelbaum



Editor's Note: Jonathan Apfelbaum provided wonderful photos to an earlier story from Doug Lovell about the Ben Lowell Aeriel Confrontation, so it seemed fitting to ask him to show us his perspective of AirVenture.

In Richard Bach's collection of short stories, *A Gift of Wings*, there is a tale where a non-aviation person asks what use is there in flying, only to get drowned out by the multitude of answers: aerobatics, contests, records, and air shows were just some of the replies. Every EAA AirVenture event is just that; an overwhelming tumult of everything aviation, and this summer was no exception.

Beautiful weather and great temperatures combined with an all-star lineup, to make it another AirVenture to remember.

The afternoon performances were, as always, pure magic. Watching these masters of aviation wring their aircraft out never ceases to amaze me. Being an amateur regarding aerobatics, I find myself trying to figure out how they make their planes do what they do...only to get lost in enjoying the beauty of it.

It is sublime to see maestros like Kyle Franklin (great to see Dracula fly!); Gene Soucy (with and without Teresa Stokes); Sean D. Tucker; the AeroShell Acrobatic Team; Mike Goulian; Kirby Chambliss (we are rooting for you in the Red Bull Races); Red Bull Skydive Team; David Martin; Patty Wag-

staff; Skip Stewart and Melissa Pemberton (individually and in Tinstix); The Geico Skytypers; Jim Peitz; Steve Oliver; Suzanne Oliver; Matt Younkin (how can you not love that big Beech?); Greg Koontz; Kent Pietsch; Jerry Kerby; Roger Buis and OTTO; Chuck Aaron (a helicopter just shouldn't be able to do that); Bob Carlton in the SubSonex; Nicholas Ivanoff; Mike Wiskus; Rob Holland, Matt Chapman, Bill Stein, and Jack Knutson (individually and flying as The 4ce); Trojan Horseman (gotta love that many radial engines in the sky at once); Justine Lewis in the microjet; and Michael Rambo with the T-6 Texan II. And last, but certainly not least, it was great to see the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds at AirVenture for once.

The part of Oshkosh that means







Trying to photograph the performers, however, can present some challenges. The sky can work with you or against you, depending on cloud cover.

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the most to me is seeing old friends and making new ones. Much has been written about the character of aviation people. At air shows and fly-ins, you never know whom you are going to meet, but once the airplane talk starts, pretty much everyone is a friend.

I was fortunate that my wife was able to get leave from the U.S. Navy to come along, plus my father got to fly his own homebuilt to Oshkosh for the first time. We ran into friends from all over, from buddies we see only at air

shows to people we haven't seen in years. I saw Glen Olsen from EAA Chapter 23, who shot the paint on my plane 10 years ago. Still looks good. Thanks, Glen!

One of my favorite life stories is about when I was shooting pictures at an air show in New Zealand and started talking with another photographer, named Nigel, who was standing next to me. He flies for British Airways, and as we were talking about airplanes, I showed him a picture of my pride and joy. He said, "Oh, I've flown that."

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It turns out Nigel once flew the very same aircraft. Some friends had flown it to California to use as a photo ship for a Bücker fly-in, and Nigel had flown it with them. Small world! I had a chance to see Nigel again this year and share a few laughs. "Kiwis" Tim Ward and Scott James joined us under the wing to watch the afternoon air show. Tim flies for Air New Zealand and flies a Europa in his spare time. Scott is returning down under after a lengthy stay here. For those of us who love to take photographs of aircraft AirVenture is pure heaven. Everywhere you look, there is another gorgeous airplane, another image to capture, another treasure shining.

Trying to photograph the performers, however, can present some challenges. The sky can work with you or against you, depending on cloud cover. For prop-driven aircraft, the shutter speed needs to be slow enough to not freeze the prop, yet fast enough to be able to avoid blurring the aircraft. You're always trying to perfect the panning technique so the camera



matches the flight path. Every year, trying to photograph the performers at AirVenture is a challenge. It is fun, frustrating, and rewarding.

There is also the issue of where you choose to stand. I had a great shot of Tinstix lined up when someone stood up right in front of me. I couldn't get mad—their formation pass with the wall of fire would make anyone jump to his feet.

When I talked with Reggie about this article, he suggested a "through the lens" viewpoint, which is a bit of a sticky subject. For starters, most people reading *Sport Aerobatics* probably are more interested in the aviating side of things than the photography side. Secondly, books have been written on the topic, so trying to distill it down into a few paragraphs seems overly simplistic. Those caveats aside, shooting ground-to-air can be quite challenging, and highly rewarding.

At the end of the day, this is what AirVenture is for me: sitting under the wing, catching up with friends, watching the amazing performers doing things you would swear were impossible, while trying to capture the perfect image. Until next year . . . .

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# Just for Starters

## It ain't always just one thing

BY GREG KOONTZ  
2014 BILL BARBER AWARD RECIPIENT

I know you've heard it before: an accident is a series of errors. It's true, you know. You might have to trace it back to when you got up that morning. You might have to go back as far as your conception, who knows. But you can always say, "If I hadn't done this, or if I hadn't gone there, I wouldn't have done this or been here." Whatever. Like those seven degrees of separation, you can trace it back.

Like most really active pilots, I have my "there I was" stories. They vary from the cute to the scary and are consistent in one easy-to-figure way: They were all avoidable. Some were just obviously dumb, some should have been detected along the way, and a few really snuck up on me. It's just the way it happens. I don't know

why I survived it all. So we share the stories, take the lumps for being such a chump, and hope someone learns from the experience.

So, there I was...a former student of mine called me up.

"Hi, Greg, it's Hienz from Louisiana. Have you ever flown a Skybolt?"

"Well, sure, a few times. They're a kind of older design, but they have their following. I've flown them with 180s, 200s, and one with an IO-540. I liked the 200 hp best," I said. "You flying one?"

"No, I bought one. It's got the 260 in it," he said.

Hienz was a fun student. He owns a Cessna 182, has a medical practice and a lovely family. He is always up and happy, and I was remembering how much fun we had when he came for his initial aero-

batic training.

"You bought one without a checkout?" I replied.

"I flew it some," he said. "I was on my way home with the ferry pilot when we had oil temperature problems. It's fixed and sitting in Columbus, Mississippi. If you'll go get it and take it to your place, I'll come over, finish my checkout with you, and fly it home."

This 'get checked out and fly it home' stuff always runs a red flag up the pole. So what happens if he takes a couple days off, travels all the way to Alabama, but doesn't finish his checkout? It just adds a level of pressure on top of the pressure a checkout like this causes by itself. But Hienz was certainly a good student before, good-natured enough to bear any lumps, and in

need of some help here. Little did I know this wasn't the sign of trouble I should have seen.

My right-hand man and crew chief, Steven Smith, flew me to Mississippi in the Super Decathlon to get this beast. It was beautiful! A bit overly finished out (and surely heavy), we found it sitting pretty in a hangar in Columbus. We fueled it up, cranked it up, and took it up. The trim was a bit of a problem, but otherwise going back to my little grass strip at home went uneventful. In route I tried out the fuel system for kicks. It had a big main tank to feed the thirsty IO-540 and a wing tank that wasn't approved for acro but helped with the engine's appetite on cross-counties. I was sure to make my first-ever switch to and from the wing tank over airports. Those wing tanks go neglected in planes that fly mostly local flights, so I wanted a good shakedown. To no one's surprise, all went well.

A week or so later Hienz showed up in his car with his wife. She could get the car home so he could fly home. We started with air work, then went on to touch-and-goes on the grass at the house. The 260-hp Skybolt ain't no Cessna! Poor visibility, heavy controls, lots of P-factor, and loads of sink rate gave Hienz some real challenges. But Hienz was up to the task, and soon we decided to test out the pavement landings the next morning when all would be calm.

This was in June in Alabama, so an early flight sounded pretty cool (literally). The Skybolt is equipped with the bubble canopy so you could roast a turkey in there by noon. I had been nursing some pretty high oil temps on our afternoon flights—something Skybolts are famous for. So Hienz, the plane, and I all saw an early morning flight as a blessing. For our first venture to the grabby pavement, I decided to take the back seat (for the brakes), the pi-

lot seat in the Skybolt. That was a good and bad thing as events were about to prove.

The flight started in the practice area for some warm-up maneuvering. Hienz was getting over the hump of this training, and I figured we were going to get to some aerobatics right after he mastered the landings. With this in mind, I was concerned about getting rid of a stash of fuel still lingering in the upper wing. So, unbeknownst to Hienz, I switched to the wing tank for our air work. When we headed down for the paved runway, I switched us back.

## “Something didn’t feel quite right so, I advanced the throttle just a little. Nothing happened. Not a thing.

The landings were going well. Hienz flew us around the pattern at this nearby airport while I monitored his progress while critiquing. All the while I was changing to the wing tank for every trip along the downwind leg and back to the main for takeoff and landing. I figured I was being pretty clever. This little effort was going to save me a siphoning job this afternoon. I was quite pleased with myself.

When I figured we had left enough rubber on the local runway, I suggested we break out of the pattern and head for home. It's a 9.8 mile commute so it just wasn't

worth climbing to anything more than pattern altitude for the ride (you're not thinking ahead of me here, are you?). This was my last chance to suck a little more fuel from the wing so I switched to it one more time. This was going to be Hienz's first grass landing from the front, so I gave him a heading for a big ole long base leg to my west-bound runway, and he confirmed he had the strip in sight. Right then, I reached down and reset the fuel selector to the main tank.

That's where the excitement began. Hienz had just idled back to adjust speed and altitude, so I didn't notice a thing at first. I didn't realize until later that even that throttle reduction played a small part. Something didn't feel quite right, so I advanced the throttle just a little. Nothing happened. Not a thing. It was running, but it didn't gain any power.

I have previously had 13 engine failures in single-engine aircraft, which resulted in forced landings. (If that sounds like bragging to you, then your mind is as warped as mine.) Anyway, if I have learned anything in those experiences (besides being more careful in my choice of aircraft to fly), it's a good procedure. Most of this learning was a slow progression. My first forced landing was a comedy of errors that resulted in a good landing with no help from me! But now I had found myself at number 14, and the experience from the last 13 was surely an asset.

Without thought or hesitation, I took the controls and reduced the speed to 80. While that was taking place, I was realizing that my runway was a little too far away so I turned toward the only choice available and a miserable choice it was. This field was too short, overgrown, unleveled, and full of ditches, stumps, and rocks. I pointed the nose at the only approach without trees but still had power lines to cross. But, as the

rules of forced landings go, the decision was made.

En route I had the landing plan (for what it was worth) in place so I went to the restart. Fuel pump on. Fuel selector to the last tank. Pump throttle. No luck. Fuel back to the main tank, pump throttle. It would idle, but every time I opened the throttle, all I got was sputters. It was clearly a vapor lock. But in any plane I knew of, what I was doing should overwhelm the lock and get us going. It just wasn't to be.

Now getting close to the field so it's time to give up on the restart and pay attention to the matter at hand, landing. This didn't look good. I was contemplating my glide over the power lines and how I was going to handle hitting the trees on the other side of this short space. As the lines approached I said, "I'm sorry Hienz, but I think we are about to get hurt." Like a man of unbreakable spirit, Hienz grabbed a couple of bars right in front of him and said, "Greg, it is what it is." I promise you I'll take those words to my grave!

As I crossed the wires, I gave it the hardest slip it would do with no regard for sink rate. I wanted to hit the ground hard and dissipate the energy that would be left for hitting the trees on the other side. Hard it was. The grass was higher than the bottom wing and was slapping and pulling on us. We hit a shallow ditch with a resounding WHAM! But we're still going. I glanced to my right and saw the field was uphill in that direction, so that's the way I went with some hard rudder. To my surprise the tall grass mixed with the uphill ride was slowing us down really fast. All I could do was chant, "Don't flip over, don't flip over, baby, please, don't flip over!" while holding full back pressure. At the top of the shallow hill, we hit a clump of low bushes and, much to our surprise, we stopped.

There was a long moment of almost total silence. The engine, almost mocking us, was still idling. Then suddenly I broke the silence with a huge, "Yahoo!" Hienz nearly pooped his pants! We had just done the seemingly impossible, and we both knew it was a matter of a lot of luck.

**"Like a man of  
unbreakable spirit,  
Hienz grabbed  
a couple of bars  
right in front of  
him and said,  
‘Greg, it is  
what it is.’"**

I grabbed my cellphone and called home. Much to my surprise, my wife, Cora, didn't answer. It was Hienz's wife on the phone. Cora was getting lunch out of the oven so she didn't answer. I just said, could I talk to Cora (I had no clue how to explain this to Hienz's wife without starting a panic). Cora had it figured out right away when I started the sentence with, "Everything is okay, nobody is hurt."

So how did I get from picking up a nice plane to sitting in a nasty little field? Mechanically, it came from an engine that not only ran hot but had been recently modified. The plane got a new fuel totalizer that had been plumbed to the wrong part of the engine. The result was a new fuel line routed too close to exhaust pipes. But, like the saying goes, it ain't always

just one thing. Also involved was an old, weak fuel pump that was having trouble pushing the hot fuel, which was easily a subject of vapor lock.

So why had this not been a problem before now? Let's look at the human factors. It is most likely that the wing tank was always used first when used at all. Then the main was selected to finish the flight. A little closer look at the fuel system after the fact revealed that the selector itself was installed about two-thirds of the way up the main tank. It was attached to a flop tube in the tank. While switching back and forth between the tanks, I was using up more main fuel than usual before exhausting the wing tank. This allowed the fuel in the main tank to drop below the level of the selector. While not in use or under pressure, that fuel could have formed an air bubble. When I switched to the main, it became a vapor lock in the hot fuel. Of course, this should have been cleared by the engine fuel pressure, but a combination of hot fuel, a weak pump, and a low power setting (remember, Hienz had just then throttled back) caused a vapor lock that just wouldn't clear. Ironically, a few minutes after landing the engine ran great!

After a new fuel pump, a new cooling tube to the pump, and some rerouting of fuel lines we might have the mechanical part of this resolved. Hopefully our theories there are correct. But a more sure correction comes from the pilot. We can hedge our safety by sticking to normal procedures. How about switching tanks at altitude and not while landing? Or being suspicious of any brilliant ideas like switching constantly back and forth between tanks?

I read somewhere once: A good pilot can handle even the most severe emergency; a great pilot knows how to avoid them. **IAC**

# Air Sickness

continued from page 7

emetic properties from the carbohydrates in them.

There are different types of wristbands on the market. All are based on acupressure concepts and techniques. Certain acupressure treatments applied to the wrist area are supposed to prevent or reduce motion sickness symptoms. Most of the wristband treatments have had no medical studies done, but one, the Relief-Band, now called Relatex, did have some studies done which showed measurable improvements in motion sickness symptoms for cruise ship passengers (2). The Relatex band, though, has electronics as well to help provide motion sickness relief. The wristbands and non-drug remedies are legal to be used by pilots while flying.

All of the treatments mentioned are to prevent airsickness. Once airsickness starts, the best solution is to get on the ground as soon as practically possible. While there are different treatments, not all will work for all students. There will have to be some trial and error tests done with your students when flying. Different methods may work for some students, while others may work for other students.

Be careful and keep your flights short while testing different airsickness remedies. Make sure you can get back to the ground quickly if necessary. Remember, too much aerobatics early on and your students and passengers may be turned off, not to mention what may need cleaning after a flight. Keep your students and passengers happy and wanting more, and they will come back!

(1) <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Airsickness>

(2) [http://www.aeromedix.com/aeromedix\\_articles/reliefband/index.html](http://www.aeromedix.com/aeromedix_articles/reliefband/index.html)

## MIKE HEUER COMMENTARY Continued from page 3

tunately we have also seen increasing cost. Even for those with a smaller budget, there are aircraft out there and contests that run only one or two days. The calendar of contests is on the IAC website and is continually updated. Find one near you, and even if you don't fly, volunteer for a job there and you will enjoy the experience and learn a lot—my first job at a contest was as an assistant judge, and I will never forget it. It helped launch me on what has been a lifetime of involvement in aerobatics.

At the highest end of intensity and competition, we have the United States participation in world championships. Teams are chosen at the U.S. Nationals, and we compete at all levels—Gliders, Advanced, and Unlimited. In August, a team of IAC members and pilots competed at the World Advanced Aerobatic Championships in Slovakia. A few weeks before that, we had two Americans in Poland for the World Glider Aerobic Championships. As I write this, we are only a few days from team selection at the U.S. Nationals in Texas, and that team of IAC members will compete in France next year in the Unlimited category.

Whatever you want to do in aerobatics, whether it is to learn about aerobatic flying, earn an Achievement Award, become involved in a chapter, serve as a volunteer, attend a judges school or aerobatic seminar, fly in a contest at any level, or work your way up to world competition—we have something for you. IAC membership can be valuable to you, and we will do everything from our end to make it better. The choice of how to be involved rests with you.

As always, if you have questions, need assistance, or want to suggest something, my contact information appears on this page. I look forward to hearing from you.

### ASK MIKE

Call or write at any time. My home number is (901) 850-1301. E-mail [mike@mheuer.com](mailto:mike@mheuer.com)

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# 10 Ways to Know You Are a Competition Aerobatic Pilot

## Are you made of the stuff it takes?

Of the approximately 500,000 pilots in the United States, there are about 500 competition aerobatic pilots. Here's how to know if you are one of them:

### **1. You are creative.**

Judges may say your aerobatic masterpiece looks like "a wounded butterfly," but great art is subjective by its very nature. Take for example the all-original Snapple Valley Loop. A séance with Jose Aresti is being arranged to ask him if it is actually an entirely new family. Or I guess we can just ask Brian Howard.

### **2. You have a nickname you don't know about.**

Or you are aware of it and are moderately uncomfortable and/or annoyed with it. This nickname is based upon real or perceived personality and behavioral traits. Suck it up, Princess. Protestations only make it stick harder.

### **3. You are tough.**

Swaying in the back of a truck in 110 degree heat, dust sticking to sweat, and wind blowing grit into every orifice is character-building. By any other minimum human-rights standards, like say, a chain gang, this would be an outrage. And you are paying for this.

### **4. You are a great communicator.**

After a flight, you have a gift for regaling in excruciating, I mean, exquisite detail, the nuances of every figure you flew. This enlightens us all. This communication is best relayed with beer. Lots of beer. That glazed look from your audience is not boredom, but rather a signal that they are ready to illuminate you with their story.

### **5. You have money sense.**

You spend \$500 over a weekend on 100LL without blinking an eyelash, but will slum in a fleabag motel to save 10 bucks a night.

### **6. In a bar, you can say you have a steep 45 with a long after and not get slapped.**

Enough said.

### **7. You blow your kid's inheritance for a fleeting moment of clinckie glory.**

You have to spend your money on something. It may as well be on something that's ridiculously demanding, challenging, and hilariously fun. Alternatively, you can always take up knitting.

### **8. You are unafraid.**

You have no qualms about inhabiting the entire brilliance/buffoonery spectrum simultaneously. This can occur within the same contest, the same flight, or for Unlimited pilots, within the same figure.

### **9. You appear strange to other humans.**

By dawn's early light, shambling zombies lurch through the Aresti Dance. At twilight, the creatures morph into animated banter, with flailing arms wildly gesticulating geometric shapes in the air. Mothers shield their young as they creep cautiously away.

### **10. You possess multiple talents.**

By day you may be a doctor or engineer. By another day you shuffle reams of paper, sling Gatorade bottles, herd cats, interpret labyrinthine rules, and try to win an argument. Oh, and fly an airplane upside down.

Thanks to Mike "Call me Steen" Hartenstein for the "Top 10" article idea. Send your ideas to [bethstanton@gmail.com](mailto:bethstanton@gmail.com).

**IAC**

## CONTEST CALENDAR



Mark your calendars for these upcoming contests. For a complete list of contests **and for the most up-to-date contest calendar**, visit [www.IAC.org](http://www.IAC.org). If your chapter is hosting a contest, be sure to let the world know by posting your event on the IAC website.

### Borrego Springs Akrofest (Northwest)

[Friday, October 10 – Saturday, October 11, 2014](#)

Practice/Registration: Thursday, October 9

Rain/Weather: Sunday, October 12

Power: Primary through Unlimited

Location: Borrego Valley Airport (Lo8): Borrego Springs, Ca

Region: Northwest

Contest Director: Yolandi Jooste

Contact Information: 714-931-7567

E-Mail: [yjooste@gmail.com](mailto:yjooste@gmail.com)

Website: <http://www.iac36.org/>

### Ace's High Aerobatic Contest (South Central)

[Saturday, October 11 – Sunday, October 12, 2014](#)

Practice/Registration: Friday, October 10

Power: Primary through Unlimited

Location: Newton City Airport (EWK): Newton, KS

Region: South Central

Contest Director: Ross Schoneboom

Contact Information: 316-519-2079

E-Mail: [schoneboommr@prodigy.net](mailto:schoneboommr@prodigy.net)

Website: <http://www.iac119.webs.com/>

### Keystone Contest (Southeast)

[Thursday, October 16 – Sunday, October 19, 2014](#)

Practice/Registration: Thursday, October 16

Power: Primary through Unlimited

Location: Keystone Airpark (42J): Keystone Heights, FL

Region: Southeast

Contest Director: Michael Breshears

Contact Information: 8302795304

E-Mail: [mabreshears@gmail.com](mailto:mabreshears@gmail.com)

Website: <http://www.iac288.org/>

### Keene Fall Classic (Northeast)

[Saturday, October 18 – Saturday, October 18, 2014](#)

Practice/Registration: Saturday, October 18

Rain/Weather: Sunday, October 19

Power Categories: Primary Sportsman

Location: Dillant-Hopkins Airport (EEN): Keene, NH

Region: Northeast

Contest Director: Farrell Woods

Contact Information: 603-801-0276

E-Mail: [Farrell.Woods@comcast.net](mailto:Farrell.Woods@comcast.net)

Website: <http://iac35.aerobaticsweb.org>

### Blue Ridge Hammerfest (Northeast)

[Friday, October 24 – Sunday, October 26, 2014](#)

Practice/Registration: Thurs, October 23–Fri, October 24

Power: Primary through Unlimited

Location: Foothills Regional Airport (MRN): Morganton, NC

Region: Northeast

Contest Director: Brandon NeSmith

Contact Information: 828-719-0391

E-Mail: [brandon@tablerockaviation.com](mailto:brandon@tablerockaviation.com)

Website: <http://www.iac19.org>

### Tequila cup (Southwest)

[Friday, November 7 – Saturday, November 8, 2014](#)

Practice/Registration: Thursday, November 6

Rain/Weather: Sunday, November 9

Glider Categories: Sportsman through Unlimited

Power Categories: Sportsman Intermediate

Advanced Unlimited

Location: Marana Avra Valley, Kavq (AVQ): Marana Arizona

Region: Southwest

Contest Director: Robbie L. Gibbs

Contact Information: 602-663-3062

E-Mail: [BudL1011@aol.com](mailto:BudL1011@aol.com)

## SARA TOBIN

**Nickname – "Smash"**  
**Occupation – Air Force officer**  
**Chapter affiliation – 5 and 12, although I don't live there anymore**  
**Age – 42**  
**E-mail – Aerobaticgirl@gmail.com**



**GD: Sarah, give us a little background on how you got started in aerobatics.**

ST: I had been flying for 10 years and was getting a little bored with the \$100 hamburger runs and teaching students S-turns across a road, so when I was stationed at Tinker Air Force Base (AFB), Oklahoma, I decided to shake things up and obtain my seaplane rating on the Illinois River and Grand Lake of the Cherokees. That was fantastic until I realized no one would rent me a seaplane, so what was the next challenge? I narrowed it down to balloon or glider, but couldn't find anyone to teach me. I then got stationed in Colorado and reconnected with my CFI Designated Examiner Rick Basiliere, who owned a Su-29 and asked him to take me up. I was instantly hooked.

**GD: When and where did you fly your first contest and how was the experience?**

ST: I flew my first contest in Lamar, Colorado, in late 2005 after only six hours of instruction. I flew Primary category in the Suk with Rick as my safety pilot (yeah I know, not your typical starting aircraft). I then moved up to Sportsman and flew with Tom Edwards in his Extra 300L. The experience was incredible! Everyone, in both Colorado chapters, is so welcoming and helpful. Even now when I live 1,500 miles away, I still lean on them for advice. They suggested I attend a judge's class to learn more about the sport and refused to allow me to purchase my first plane (Yak-55m) until I attended a formal spin training class.

**GD: What category are you currently flying in and what aircraft are you flying?**

ST: Intermediate, Rebel 300. I thought I would be further along at this point, but between two deployments, a tornado taking out my Yak, moving five times, a prop strike, having a new plane built, using various loaner planes, and traveling for work half of the year, it has been challenging!

**GD: How did you acquire the nickname "Smash"?**

ST: Disclaimer: No airplanes were hurt in the making of this call sign. The short version is that I

am not an excellent driver. When I was stationed at Cheyenne Mountain, my two-star general told me I needed to stop doing aileron rolls with my cars.

**GD: From all of us in the International Aerobatic Club, thank you for your service. Please tell us about your military career.**

ST: First off, it is my pleasure, and I can't imagine doing anything else. When I was 5 years old, my parents and I were stuck in traffic on the way to Ocean City, Maryland, and the Blue Angels passed overhead. I jumped out of the car and proclaimed, "That's what I want to do when I grow up!" From that moment on, I was determined to fly for the Air Force. After much begging and pleading, my folks allowed me to attend New Mexico Military Institute for high school, and my dad said I could join any service, as long as it was the Air Force. When I was accepted at West Point instead of the coveted United States Air Force Academy, the decision was easy to decline. Working three jobs through college, it wasn't feasible TO DO ROTC. After becoming a flight instructor and working for Mesa Airlines, I applied and was accepted to Officer Training School as a pilot candidate. I flew T-3s in Hondo, Texas; T-34Cs with the Navy at Whiting Field, Florida; and T-38s at Vance AFB, Oklahoma. After some medical complications, I ended up transitioning to be an air battle manager on the E-3B/C. For the last 10 years I have been working on Joint Integrated Air and Missile Defense concerns facing the homeland and other Combatant Commands. I am currently the chief of war games at Langley AFB, Virginia, and will be making my 13th move in 18 years to the Pentagon next year after another CENTCOM deployment in January.

**GD: What are your aspirations after you leave the military?**

ST: I have no idea what I want to do when I grow up. I do have my ATP, and the temptation to go fly boxes that don't complain is definitely there, but I really love what I do to protect the nation. And if there is some way to continue to do that in the civil sector or contract world, I think I would lean towards that.

**GD: In your opinion, is the Unlimited category now out of reach for the average competitive pilot? If so, what should be done about it?**

ST: I don't necessarily think that a particular category is a limiting factor; I think the sport in general is. I have often lamented that we don't necessarily have the best pilots flying and winning these competitions; we have the ones with the most time off work and disposable income. We all sit around wishing that more young people could get into the sport, but it's unrealistic to expect that unless they have a parent who is already in the sport or they come from a wealthy family. I think back to how many sacrifices I made in college to pay for that \$30/hour C-150 and an extra \$10/hour for the instructor. I don't think I would have been able to do that today at an average cost of \$175/hour and double that for acro instruction. As if the upfront cost of an airplane isn't biting enough, as I approach Nationals and look at the \$1,600 fuel bill to fly to Texas and back, plus entry fees, hotel, and food expenses, it is easy to see why the sport hasn't grown much in the short time I have been involved. I love this sport and am excited to see how far I can go with my limited time off and deep pockets, but I do wish we could find a way to make it more affordable for people to fly in something other than a Super D in Sportsman.

**GD: Do you have a preflight routine, like yoga, stretching, or listening to music before you strap in?**

ST: I listen to death metal while doing the box dance. Disturbed is my current favorite—it gets the adrenaline pumping. I will choose lines in the concrete to represent the markers and align myself with actual direction of flight, walk through all the figures trying to envision the actual visual cues I will see in the box, and will even contract my muscles as required. Most of the time I actually feel winded from the "g's" after a walk through, but that helps me prepare for what to expect. If nothing goes wrong between the last walk through and box time, I normally perform at my best, but like most Type A folks, if you throw a monkey wrench into it, I have a hard time getting out of my own way and not letting things get to me.

**GD: What other interests do you have outside of aerobatics?**

ST: I love historic traveling, scuba diving, competitive shooting, skiing, hiking, you name it, I will do it...Oh, and I can sing a mean classic country karaoke song.

**GD: Last question: Do you know where your wheel-pants are?**

ST: Nope.

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