

DECEMBER 2009

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OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE INTERNATIONAL AEROBATIC CLUB

Debby Rihn Harvey:

The 2009 U. S.
National Champion

- Awards Summary
- Akro Artist





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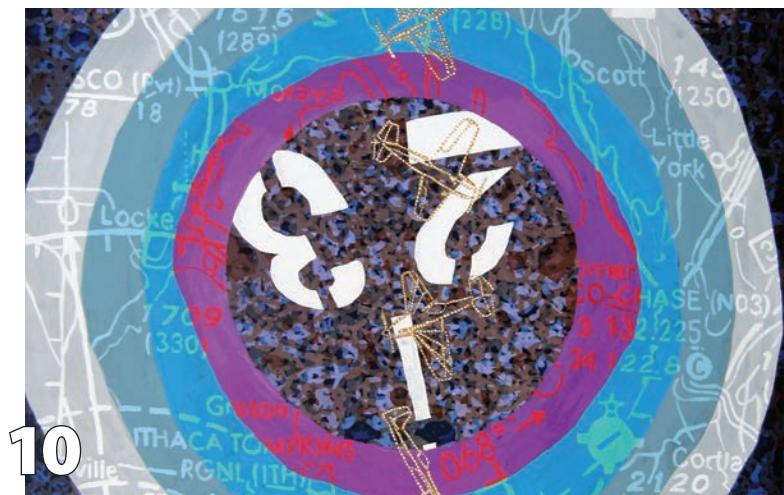
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Your 2009 National Unlimited Champion, Debby Rihn-Harvey, flashing her signature smile.

— Photo: Scott Slocum

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LETTER from the EDITOR

by Reggie Paulk

The 2009 Nationals

It's hard to believe it's already been a year since Debby Rihnharvey took the Unlimited title at the 2008 National Championships. As I write this, Christmas is still almost two months away, but by the time you read this, we'll be deeply ensconced in winter. All the better to think back to the warm months of September and the National Championships.

For 2009, Debby once again captured the Unlimited trophy, making this her third win. It's quite amazing when you think about the fact that she flies as a captain for Southwest Airlines, has a full air show schedule, instructs students and travels to multiple engagements throughout the country. In addition, one month prior to Nationals, she was in Silverstone, England flying as part of the U.S. Unlimited World Aerobatic Team.

When I tried to contact her for the story in these pages, she was unable to speak with me because she was trying to recover her voice for a speaking engagement with AOPA. I decided to send her a questionnaire instead. I don't know where she finds the time.

In addition to the Unlimited title, many other competitors come to Dennison, Texas to try their hand at a title. It doesn't matter whether a pilot flies in Primary, Sportsmen, Intermediate, Advanced or Unlimited. It takes a great deal of time, effort and dedication to be able to participate at Nationals. I want to take this opportunity to let you know that I'm going to be covering their unique stories in the months ahead.

Included in this issue is a story from Lise Lemeland about the artistry of aerobatics. Lise has merged her love and career of artistry with her passion for flying and aerobatics in particular. It sure is something to see aerobatics through the eyes of an artist.

... Debby once again captured the Unlimited trophy...

Although flying is the focus of Nationals, none of that would be possible without the tireless efforts of the volunteers on the ground. To that end, the IAC's non-flying awards of merit give credit to those individuals

who have gone above and beyond in their passion for the sport. For those of you who aren't individually recognized in these pages, please know that it is because of you the IAC is such a strong organization. If you're reading this, thank you.

Please submit news, comments, articles, or suggestions to: reggie.paulk@gmail.com

PRESIDENT'S PAGE

by Doug Bartlett • doug@bartlettmfg.com



Douglas S. Bartlett

Insurance and Safety

Our staff, officers and directors of the IAC just finished the fall board meetings in Oshkosh. With the exception of IAC manager Trish Deimer, who works for us full time in Oshkosh, the officers and directors are volunteers who attend these meetings at their own expense. Please take a minute to go to the website and review the minutes of that meeting. Although it is dry reading, it will give you a good idea of how these volunteers are working to support all of the members of the IAC. We are lucky to have a strong group of directors that work well together and I would like to thank them for their efforts

At these meetings hard work is done to develop, monitor, and to modify if necessary, programs to benefit our members. One program we've had tremendous success with is the new IAC Aircraft Insurance Program, which the Board signed onto in April 2008. This is a partnership of Northwest Insurance Group, Inc. (our Broker) and Berkley Aviation, LLC (our current Insurance Company). When Northwest Insurance joined with the IAC to develop an insurance package for our members, some assumptions about risk needed to be made. The new program is attempting to provide a rich set of benefits for all IAC members, but as insurance goes, the program could not exactly fit the needs of all members. Over the last year the insurance company providing the policies has reasonably adjusted the premiums to provide better solutions for our members across the board. The result of the most recent changes will show a more evenly applied spectrum of rates and requirements in attempt to keep the program healthy and profitable, ergo a long-term relationship with our insurance providers.

Before I go on to ask all members for their support in this program,

I would like to identify the areas that our insurance partners, Northwest Insurance Group and Berkley Aviation, help support the IAC. Since the program started in April of 2008, more than \$25,000 of royalties have been paid to the IAC as a result of our members choosing to buy their insurance through the IAC program. A valuable set of articles have been published in our magazine teaching all members about the field of aircraft insurance while at the same time paying \$20,000 in magazine advertising costs. These funds go to the direct support of all members. As a continuing show of support, Northwest has provided receptions at AirVenture and Sun-N-Fun, saving the IAC more than \$10,000. Further, our insurance partners have sponsored chapter contests, trophies at our National Championships and have given \$25,000 dollars to our Unlimited Team.

The insurance partnership has certainly worked as well as we had hoped. Together, we have not achieved the critical mass needed for the program to continue in its present form. In short, we need more participation from the IAC membership.. We are continually at risk of losing some of the aggressive support that has been given to us in the past. For those owners who quoted IAC Aircraft Insurance programs in the past and did not find any savings, I am asking you to take another look at the current rate structure. For those who are seeing increases in their premiums, I am asking for you to compare those increases against the large decreases you may have seen in the recent past.

As Northwest Insurance President Ryan Birr said, "It took some time and experience to fine tune the program and as a result the rates have changed for some of our renewals. Some are higher, but for some that didn't work out last year, there may be some improvements too. We have the very best policy form available anywhere in any program offered to any pilot group. The IAC members are the direct beneficiaries of Vicki's very hard work on this program." Let's keep this program going.

Let us switch subjects to another program that was discussed at the board meeting: safety. Last month, I stated that the IAC must place the highest priority on safety. Since that

time there has been a call from our membership to review the recent safety record of our sport, and the board of directors agrees. There have been several accidents in the past few years resulting in the injury or loss of well-trained pilots respecting the laws of physics and the limitations of their aircraft. Is it possible that something has changed or that we are now pushing too close to the safety margin of our sport? Paolo Zoppi, an Italian delegate to CIVA, thinks so along with several IAC members.

This question cannot be answered easily, but the board has formed a committee to look into this issue directly. We are pleased to have Robert Meyer as the Chairman of this committee. Over the next several months, Bob will form the committee and will work on developing programs to enhance the safety of our sport for the benefit of aerobatic pilots and aerobatic enthusiasts alike. I will keep you posted on our progress. 



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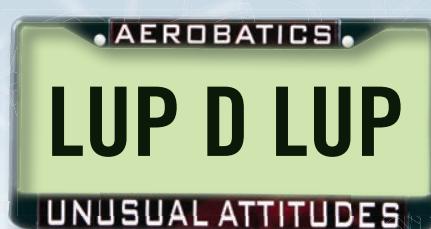
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Your Three-Time 2009 National **Unlimited Champion**

Debby Rihn-Harvey with Reggie Paulk – Photos by Scott Slocum

Q: This is the second year in a row, and your third time winning the Nationals. How would you describe the experience of winning for your third time?

A: Winning the Nationals is a career dream. The fact that I have won it three times is unbelievable and a thrill. I guess it is proof that it wasn't just an accident in the past. Seriously though, any of the competitors could win. It depends on who performs the best and is most consistent during the week of the Nationals. I really didn't expect to win, and hadn't practiced as much as usual any of those three years due to mechanical, physical or weather excuses; maybe that is the answer and the secret to my success.

Q: You flew at the World Aerobatic Championships just prior to Nationals. Losing Vicki Cruse during the Worlds was a huge blow, but she was a close personal friend of yours. How has her loss influenced you over the last few months?

A: Losing Vicki was a great blow to the entire team, the world, and the sport of aerobatics. The fact that we did fly at all after the accident was one of the hardest things I have ever had to do. Many people questioned us for continuing, but I could hear that little voice with her "special use of the English Language" telling me to get in the airplane. It took some time after returning home to overcome the psychological obstacles. I continued to take one step at a time, not knowing whether I would be ready

DEBBY RIHN-HARVEY

to fly the Nationals. I know Vicki was supporting me the entire time and was excited for my win. We all miss our friend.

We know that this sport has calculated risks, but we emphasize safety, we practice, and we get critiqued. We inspect our airplanes and maintain them constantly. It is difficult to get in someone else's airplane that may not be tweaked like yours and adapt, do well, or be totally confident. We need to have our personal airplanes at the WAC, ones that we know and have the utmost confidence in.

This sport promotes safety and we continue because we love it. It teaches us to be better pilots with much more awareness and confidence. Through this sport, we meet great people and make many friends. It is this that makes the calculated risks worthwhile and I will continue to work hard in and for the sport of aerobatics.

Q: As an airline pilot, air show performer and aerobatic champion, what aspects of each form of flying appeal to you?

A: There is so much variety in aviation. I enjoy them all. I guess I get bored easily and need the challenge. Airline flying is rewarding in that you get to fly larger aircraft while trying to meet the many challenges associated with leading a team. It's also rewarding to carry people to many destinations in varying weather conditions and on a schedule. It's precision and harmony in its own way.

Air shows for me are a time of fun, unharnessed aerobatics without the judges. It is an avenue to promote aerobatics and aviation, women in aviation, and to be a role model. I encourage people to follow their dreams and know that anything is possible. After all, look at that crazy old gray-haired lady.

Competition is a challenge of you against perfection. We all take pride in being able to make the airplane do what we want it to do. Now we add varying atmospheric conditions and





locations along with that stress we put on ourselves because, after all, it is a contest. Competition has given me so much enjoyment along with a great deal of frustration; but mostly, it has opened the door to making many good friends throughout the world.

Q: Tell us a little something about you not many people may know, and that is not related to aviation.

A: Well this is difficult because the last 31 years my life has pretty much been nothing other than aviation. I was involved in Masonic Organiza-

tions while growing up and I still occasionally participate in youth leadership activities. I raced quarter midgets and drove demolition derby cars. Some still think I drive that way. I enjoy music and the arts. I played violin for years, but always wanted to learn the piano, so four years ago I began taking lessons. I studied pre-med in college, graduating with a degree in Biology and Medical Technology. I supervised a hospital lab for about eight years while waiting for the world to realize that women could fly airplanes.

Q: Are there any hobbies you pursue outside of flying?

A: Bowling. When I was about seven years old, my parents paid for lessons while they were on a league and I have bowled ever since. For over 30 years during the winter season, I have bowled on a league. My teammates won't let me quit and I always say that it's my $\frac{1}{2}$ day away from aviation.

Shooting guns is the other hobby. We used to carry our handguns and rifles to the aerobatic practice area and would shoot clay and targets while waiting on the weather to clear up. For work and for personal defense, I continued training to become more proficient. Now, my competitive spirit has taken over again as I've begun entering into various types of shooting competitions. Much like aerobatics, the competition is between yourself and perfection.

Q: Can you describe your airplane and the reasons you choose to fly this particular model in competition?

A: The sport, as one might well imagine, has progressed a lot over the last 31 years. I have had three aircraft during the past 27 years of flying Unlimited, starting in a highly modified Pitts. Monoplanes became popular as they had less aerodynamic drag, faster speed, faster roll rates and they were slightly larger and easier to see. Over about a ten-year period, we built the Texas Hurricane, which started its development as a modified Laser, ending up as a one-of-a-kind mid-wing monoplane. In 1999, the Texas Hurricane needed to be totally inspected and rebuilt and I didn't want to give up that much time from flying. The CAP, which was a French factory-built airplane, had done well in World Competition for years. I had flown Linda Meyer's CAP 231 a couple of times during the WAC practice in 1992 while the Texas Hurricane was down a few days for maintenance. Mike Goulian and David Martin had flown and purchased the new CAP model (232) and liked the airplane. I called the factory to inquire as to the possible delivery schedule of a new airplane and was surprised to find out that I could have one in about five months.

The reason I chose the CAP was that it presented well in the air, had been winning and I felt it would



be easier to transition into. The airplane's profile made precise and accurate flying obvious to the judges; however, mistakes were also just as visible. The propeller turned the same direction as everything that I had flown my entire life, therefore I wouldn't have to relearn control

inputs (muscle memory) opposite to what I had done for years. The CAP controls require very little pressure input, the roll rate is 420 degrees per second and the pilot has great visibility. I don't regret the decision. The airplane has rewarded me with many titles and championships.

Q: Anyone who's met you knows your smile goes with you even off-camera. How do you stay humble in the face of so much success?

A: Most of the time you are correct, I do smile. I like to say that it makes people wonder what I am up to, but really it's because I enjoy life. I have been very fortunate to have had the opportunity to do all these things and have a family that has supported me. I am positive and motivated and hope to inspire and help others to follow their hopes and dreams. Life is what you make of it, not always as planned, but you must be proud of what you do and who you are.

I have been very fortunate in my life, with my career, with titles and recognitions. However, I also know and tell people that anyone could have and can do it. Anyone who wants to spend the time, has the desire and is determined and dedicated enough can be just as successful. I had the help of many who were there to encourage me along the way. All paths will have obstacles; it is how we deal with those obstacles that is important. I am a perfectionist and have yet to fly that perfect contest.

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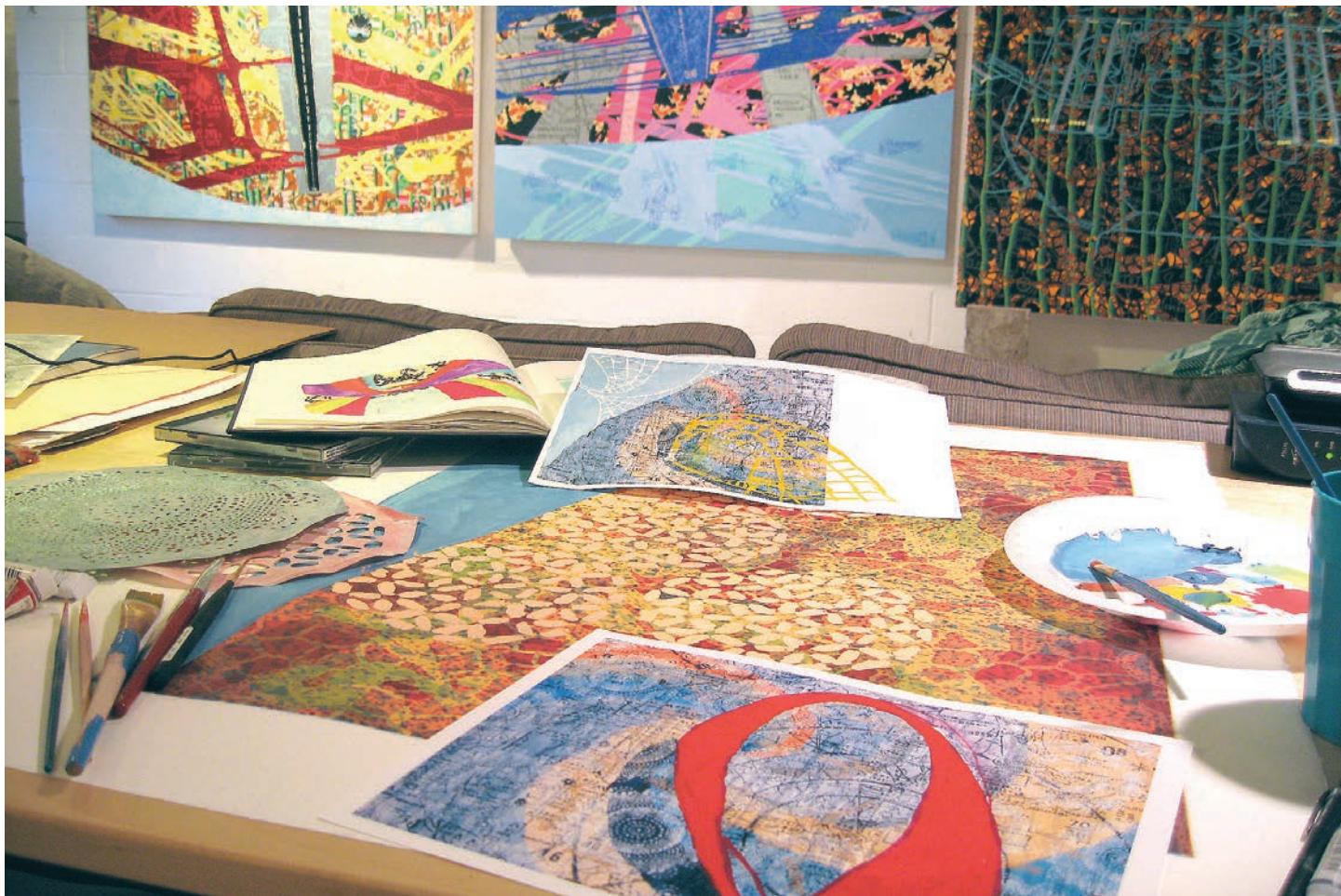
Akro Artist



Lise Lemeland

I am an artist, an academician, an aviatrix and an aerobat, in that chronological order. I have been painting for more than 20 years, and I have been flying for less than two years. Like most artists, my artwork has changed in style and theme since I started painting. Every so often the changes are drastic, like the rebellious teens I teach who transform their appearances from one day to the next. More often my transitions are subtle. But never has my artwork undergone a major thematic overhaul as it did soon after I found myself at the controls of a single-engine airplane.





The artist's studio.

I never planned to be a pilot, let alone an aerobatic pilot. But then, I never planned to be an artist either. In fact, I have always had this impression that somewhere there exists a map of my life, that I've never been privileged to see. And yet when a path appears that I am meant to follow, in the midst of my uncertainty, an invisible hand seems to grip my spirit. The pull is powerful. In that moment, insight compels me to follow my heart.

What's Your Calling?

When I was a little girl, my parents covertly stocked my bedside table with little art books about Picasso, Monet, and van Gogh. I looked at the pictures when I couldn't sleep. When I was 7, while vacationing on Martha's Vineyard, my mother accidentally hit a tennis ball into my open eye, which incited a panicked trip to the ER. The physician put yellow dye drops into my eye to see if there were any scratches and asked me what I saw.

To his surprise, I told him quite seriously that I could see like van Gogh. His eyes widened, and he asked me why. I said (with a giggle) that everything had a yellow tint, including him. As strange as this response may have been, something even stranger was happening in my head. In my mind, I had somehow connected my injury with the strange dead painter, the one who painted everything yellow and who had voluntarily cut off his own ear! Wow! That was my first hint that an unusual force was at work.

The aviation equivalent to that story was my first flight in a small aircraft, 33 years later, also on Martha's Vineyard. One beautiful afternoon, I took a ride in a Waco UPF-7 out of Katama airstrip. It was a pretty spur-of-the-moment decision; I was not a flier and had never aspired to be one.

My pilot must have sensed a fellow adventurer in the front seat, because the next thing I knew he was looping and rolling me through the skies off South Beach. I was both terrified and ecstatic, just like I was at age 7 on my first roller coaster ride. When I left Katama, I couldn't talk of anything but the biplane ride for months afterward. Just ask my kids. My spirit was in the clutches of the invisible hand again, and I knew I had to try flying.

The Role of Insight

For me, insight has become a powerful mental tool. When the mind is under its guidance, we rely on both the analytical language center known as the left brain as well as the synthesizing center of the right brain, known for its ability to make distant and unprecedented connections. Flying involves both hemispheres at the same time: You must be able to see the forest *and* the trees. Not surprisingly, painting also involves both.

Do you remember the famous story of aviator Neil Williams, who had the misfortune of watching his left wing fold upward in the middle of an air show flight? He had only a moment to figure out how to fix the problem and stay alive. At high speed his left brain rifled through reams of data while his right brain processed it. In a split second, the precise connection was made and a solution was formulated. It was insight that caused him to roll inverted to unbuckle the wing. He was able to fly that way until he rolled hard upright, just above the runway, and landed.

Our minds have access to masses of information. They can link, surmise, and intuit so well that we are able to handle situations we couldn't ever predict, sometimes even with finesse.

The inverted flight, spins, loops, and rolls literally turned my world upside down.

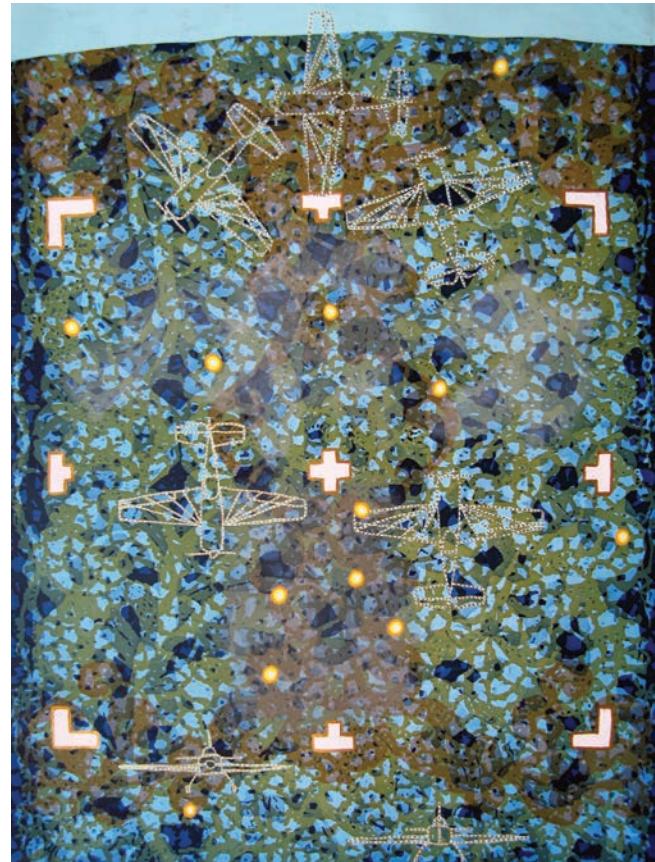
In art, insight leads an artist to make many decisions. People always ask me if I plan out my paintings, which can be very detailed and visually complex. They are surprised when I tell them that I rarely have a plan for a painting, and that I've never made one from start to finish without a lot of modifications. Ever had the feeling that something is not quite right, but you can't put your finger on it? My job in the studio is to recognize that feeling, identify the offending color/pattern/shape/subject, and then fix it. Sometimes the process is instantaneous. Other times it takes days, weeks, months...and often the offender is actually the part of the painting that once seemed the best.

An Uncomfortable Transition

Soon after my ride in the Waco two summers ago, I ventured to my local airport for an intro flight. As I suspected, I fell head over heels in love with flying. I flew as much as my schedule would permit, usually two or three times a week. Two months after I soloed, I took an unusual attitudes course at Executive Flyers Aviation in Bedford, Massachusetts.



Practice Day: SFO (detail).



Seeing Stars.



Lise Lemeland: artist, teacher, and pilot.

The experience really changed my life. The inverted flight, spins, loops, and rolls literally turned my world upside down. The artist in me could see nothing more beautiful than the horizon spinning around the wingtip or the nose of my Super Decathlon. The visual experience of aerobatics was a logic-defying, pseudo-psychedelic drug, and I wanted more. More aerobatics!

In the months that followed, flying became all consuming, and my studio time suffered. I would work on my paintings, but only while listening to LiveATC over the computer. I played Rod Machado's Aviation Humor seminar from AOPA's website while I painted, and laughed out loud. I watched old *Sporty's Learn To Fly* VHS tapes while I stenciled my canvases with patterns.

As time wore on, I felt something was not right in the paintings, and it made me uncomfortable. Then it hit me. Clearly, my subject matter wasn't in sync with my life anymore. I realized that aerobatics is my art, and therefore my art needed to be about aerobatics. Was it insight? I believe so.

Aerobic Aesthetics: Form and Content

In my experience, art, aviation, and aerobatics share much more than what meets the eye. They are all examples of the beautiful and harmonious marriage of right- and left-brain tasks, wonderful and challenging. Both skills rely heavily on muscle memory, visualization, and a lot of practice.

There is an art of aerobatics when we are flying. Competition aerobatics prizes an aesthetic that has much to do with symmetry, lines, and a continual search for elegance. There is repetition and variation, all happening within the structure of an invisible 3,300-foot cube of airspace called the aerobatic box. The box is the canvas, the airplane is the paintbrush, and the judges follow the invisible lines of the flight path. Judges look at the composition—how you use the space in the box—and call it "presentation."

"The box is the canvas, the airplane is the paintbrush . . ."

Executing a slow roll, for example, has many similarities to painting. You roll around a point or landmark (and if visibility is sketchy, you imagine it). As you are rolling, you make a series of mental assessments about the relationship of the nose to the point. Is it equidistant? That's the beginning of a well-executed roll. In painting, this is called proportion: the ability to assess relationships of forms, one to another. Your roll rate is another important criteria, and you want to keep it constant. This is like line quality in art: a steady pressure/even speed creates a uniform line.

Even a novice knows that a loop is supposed to be round, not elliptical. But the act of performing the loop also has a corresponding skill in painting, namely muscle memory. I recall my aerobatic instructor talking me

through the loop in ground school one day, and watching him cock his head to look at the imaginary wingtip and crane his neck to catch the imaginary horizon coming down through the top window.

As we practice these maneuvers over and over, we train our muscles to make a series of movements. Automatically, our eyes are in the correct position to gather the information we need about our placement. It's an amazing and probably odd-looking dance, but it works. When an artist studies the human figure, for example, we also practice over and over so that the hand learns the form.

These are all formal issues that have to do with the way things look. And yet there are important issues of content: the way things feel, or the range of emotions that are conjured up in the viewer.

To the uninitiated, aerobatics can be disorienting. You might feel fear, a sense of thrill, dizziness, rapture, or all of the above. (Any of you aerobats remember your first aerobatic flight?)

What I remember most was the feeling that I had just been graced with a sensation that I had no words to describe—it went beyond my realm of experience. My pilot did a loop and then a barrel roll, and *I had no idea what he had done!* I recollect the sensation of my body weight doubling as the Waco clawed its way up the loop; the short float over the top when I felt as light as an astronaut in space; the blood rushing out of my brain as we dove toward the ocean; the horizon coiling around the nose of the airplane and looking up to see—to my astonishment—the ocean!

In aerobatic aesthetics, form is defined by symmetry, presentation, alignment—the things the judges look for. And what defines content is all of the sensations and emotions that transpire in the cockpit—the pilot's perspective. It's only through practice and experience that we gain mastery over the disorientation and bring our art and aerobatics into sharper focus.

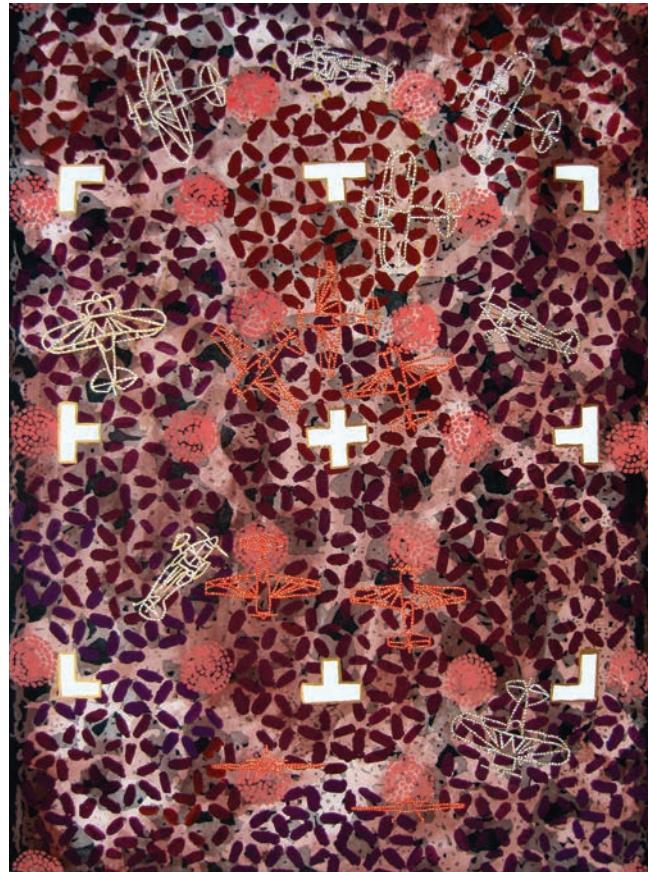
I returned to my studio with this goal: to find ways to show my viewer, through visual language, what aerobatics feels *and* looks like.

The Art of Aerobatics

Some of my paintings deal with other aspects of flying, including but not limited to aerobatics. *Behind the Airplane* is about the confusion and stress of getting behind. It's happened to all of us pilots, and it's not a good feeling: You're in the cockpit, inverted and headed for Runway 18. There are 20-plus precision approach path indicator lights, because every time you check them, they multiply. You see runways and taxiways from other airports layered on top of each other. Bits and pieces from sectionals are mixed up, but the map is incorrect. Your attitude indicator (impossibly) shows that you're upside-down. You are confused and on the verge of a disaster.

In *Aileron Roll*, I place my viewer in the cockpit, also inverted. Runway 18/36 extends before you with its vertebrae of taxiways, arcing through a landscape of lacy patterns. The image of the runway repeats and rotates 360 degrees around the nose, implying the roll. In delicate line drawings, two Pitts execute aileron rolls across the blue sky, which lies beneath you.

A series of large canvases entitled "Practice Days" deals with a different perspective. *Practice Day: SFO* depicts an aqua-blue version of San Francisco's airspace from a terminal area chart, including all symbols, numbers, and text. A patterned cloud layer is stenciled in translucent white, and on top of that are dozens of gold, beaded aerobatic airplanes (Pitts and Extras) doing loops, hammerheads, and spins. The planes are all close to each other, their flight paths overlapping. Even though the painting depicts the congestion of the airspace, at a distance the airplanes disappear and the sky seems deceptively clear.



Hammerheads in the Box.



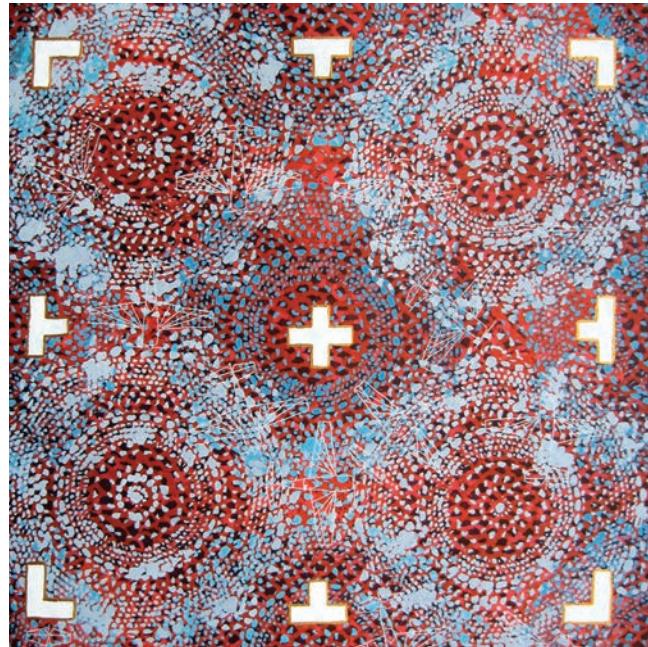
Field In Sight.



It was love at first flight.



Grey Out.



Ghosts of the Box (detail).

My latest foray into competition aerobatics has sparked a reoccurring image from studying the IAC rulebook text. In a series of works on paper, with titles such as *Hammerheads in the Aerobatic Box*, *Gray Out Over Runway 23*, *Seeing Stars in the Aerobic Box*, and *Ghosts of the Aerobic Box*, the white boundary markers of the box appear. Airplanes are doing their figures with order, symmetry, and precision, just as in competition.

“... flying is an endless discovery and a constant learning process, just like painting.”

Aesthetic Aerobatics

I've written a lot about how aerobatics has influenced my art, but what about art influencing my flying? There are certainly times that my visual skills come in handy while flying. Maneuvers that use the horizon, from the early steep turns, to rolls, loops, and half-Cubans, all rely heavily on the ability to discern angles between the sight or wingtip and the horizon.

Veteran aerobic pilots advise me that alignment is very important, and my grades on my figures were proof. Points are easily lost due to entering and exiting figures off heading. Luckily, I'm the picture-straightener, and wrong angles in a painting drive me nuts. Though I strive for heading accuracy in competition, I'm still pretty green at it.

As I mentioned, presentation, or using the length, width, and vertical altitude of the box, is also important. This makes perfect sense artistically, because all compositions in paintings need to make use of the whole canvas. Getting the airplane to do that—well, that's another story!

Aerobatics Artist

I'm sure you have been told that no two landings are the same. To me, no two paintings are the same either. Likewise, flying is an endless discovery and a constant learning process, just like painting. My work continues to evolve, and sometimes it seems defiant and even intractable. I believe that's where intuition and insight come into play. The mind is making connections whether or not you're conscious of it, and it will let you know in time. In my case, the invisible hand gives a good tug when it needs my attention.

As an artist and a pilot who loves aerobatics, I've sometimes said that I've painted myself into a corner. The aerobatics and the artwork are now inextricable from each other, the former feeding the latter. When the weather is bad, the finances tight, the responsibilities of my teaching job or family keep me from the airport, I'm doubly deprived. My inspiration is all wrapped up in aerobatics. But is that *really* a handicap?

How can one explain the feeling of flying an airplane upside-down? Of the straps being the only apparatus keeping you from dropping out of an open cockpit and into the ocean? Of the looming ground spinning so quietly around your nose in a spin because you have cut your engine?

Why use words at all? I use my brushes to let the world in on an experience that few people, and only a small percentage of all pilots, share. And maybe, through my paintings, I will inspire another 7-year-old girl to think about flying.

Maybe she'll even take an intro aerobatic flight. If she does...I bet she'll be hooked. ☺

Lise Lemeland is a pilot, a professional artist and a professor at Alfred University in southwestern NY. She has exhibited nationally and internationally, and was awarded a Joan Mitchell Foundation Fellowship for Painting in 2006. She began aerobatic training in 2008, and earned her Private Pilot's Certificate in 2009. This year, she was awarded the Doug Yost Memorial Scholarship for Aerobatics, and also received a NYFA grant to videotape unusual attitudes in flight for artistic research. See her work at www.lisemeland.com

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General Area Quarter brick	\$350

Inscription Guidance:^{*}

Full brick (24"x24" square)

- 30 characters across with up to 11 lines of text

Half brick (12"x24" square)

- 30 characters across with up to 6 lines of text

Quarter brick (12"x12" square)

- 16 characters with up to 6 lines of text

*Logos can be reproduced on the brick for an additional charge of \$100. Logos and other graphic designs will impact the available space for lettering.

For more information and to purchase your brick today, visit www.airventure.org/arch or contact EAA's Development Office at 1-800-236-1025.

Recognizing Excellence:

Each year at the U.S. Nationals, the IAC presents four special awards. These awards require nomination, and the winners are chosen based on their significant contribution to the sport of aerobatics and how closely their achievements parallel the criteria for the award.

Nominations for these awards should be sent to iac@eaa.org. The deadline for nominations for the year 2009 is June 15, 2010. The **2009** awards will be presented at the U.S. Nationals next year.



Photos by Laurie Zaleski

The 2008 Harold E. Neumann Award winner is Kevin Campbell. Award is presented by IAC President Doug Bartlett (left).

Kathy Jaffe Volunteer Award

Kathy Jaffe, who passed away in 1999, was a pilot known for her enthusiasm and excitement for aerobatics. The first award was presented in 2000 and is given annually to an individual who embodies an enthusiasm for aerobatics through his or her tireless efforts in support of the sport the previous year. The award winner is one who consistently, unselfishly, and eagerly accepts more responsibilities than he or she can handle; who meets those responsibilities with tireless effort, efficiency, and a smile; and who places the needs of others above his or her own, making the sport of aerobatics more enjoyable for everyone.

The trophy is a beautiful glass sculpture consisting of a tall cylinder etched with vortices coming off the wingtips of a Pitts Special rolling vertically. It was designed by Bob and Karen Minkus, both aerobatic enthusiasts and volunteers for many years. This trophy and the master trophy on display at the IAC Pavilion in Oshkosh are made possible through the support of the Kathy Jaffe Memorial Fund. The master trophy is engraved with each annual recipient's name. Previous winners include Ray and Lois Rose, Ann Salcedo, Joanne Johnson, Maryilnn Holland, Hal Raish, Bob Buckley, Julia Wood, Gary Mack and Phil Schacht.

The 2008 Kathy Jaffe Volunteer Award winner is Randy Owens.

Harold E. Neumann Award

The family of Harold E. Neumann provided a permanent trophy in 1998 to recognize an outstanding chief judge and to honor the name of Neumann—a Robert J. Collier Trophy recipient, Thompson Trophy Race winner, and active IAC competitor and judge until well into his 70s. The award is given annually for outstanding contribution as a chief judge during the previous contest year. Recipients are known for leadership qualities and fairness on the judges' line. They conduct each contest flight in a professional manner and are widely respected for their knowledge of and experience with IAC rules and judging criteria.

The award, previously presented at the IAC Championships in the year following the contest year for which it is presented, is now awarded at the U.S. Nationals. The recipient receives a plaque, and the master trophy remains on display at the IAC Pavilion in Oshkosh. Previous winners include Alan Geringer, Clyde Cable, Phil Knight, Ken Larson, John Gaillard, Ray Rose, Dick Schulz, Charlie Harrison, Randy Reinhardt and Greg Dungan.

The 2008 IAC AWARDS of MERIT ... Non-Flying



The 2008 Robert L. Heuer Award winner is Doug Lovell. Award is presented by IAC President Doug Bartlett (left).



The 2008 Frank Price Cup award winner is Lew Shattuck. Award is presented by IAC President Doug Bartlett (left).

Robert L. Heuer Award for Judging Excellence

The Robert L. Heuer Award for Judging Excellence was conceived by Sam Burgess of San Antonio, Texas. The award is given annually for outstanding performance as an aerobatic judge. Nominees must be a national judge and must judge a minimum of three contests per year including the U.S. Nationals. This award was first presented in 1983.

The recipient receives a plaque, and the master trophy remains on display at the IAC Pavilion in Oshkosh. Previous winners of this award include Clint McHenry, Bill Thomas, Ben Lowell, Mike Heuer, Liza Weaver, Buck Weaver, George Stock, Clyde Cable, Alan Geringer, Brian Howard (2), Bob Minkus, Maryilnn Holland, Gerrit Vanderziel, Greg Dungan, Michael Steveson, Jim Klick, Alan Geringer, Tom Adams, and Lynne Stoltenberg.

Frank Price Cup

The Frank Price Cup was conceived and donated by R.J. Rouse of Texas. It was first presented in 1983. It was created to recognize outstanding individuals in aerobatics and in honor of aerobatic pioneer Frank Price, the first American to compete in the World Aerobatic Championships. The purpose of the award is to recognize the person who has contributed the most to the sport of aerobatics in the previous year.

The trophy consists of a laser-cut plaque with a photograph of the permanent trophy set in the plaque.

The master trophy is engraved with the recipient's name and is on permanent display at the IAC Pavilion in Oshkosh. Previous winners include Mike Heuer, Eric Müller, Jose Aresti, James Black, Chuck Mann, Dan Rihn, Chuck Alley, Dick and June Rihn, Jim and Jean Taylor, Lois Rose, Robert and Karen Minkus, Brian Howard, Gerry Molidor, Guenther Eichhorn, John Morrissey, Marta Meyer and Lorrie and Gordon Penner.

All of the awards mentioned require nominations by IAC members. Nominations are welcome from either individual members or collectively from a chapter. Nominations should include a statement with justification as to why your candidate fits the criteria for the award and should be written in a way that board members who may not personally know the candidate will see the merits of the candidacy from the supporting letter. The IAC Master Trophies and Awards pages located at the IAC website at www.IAC.org/programs/index.html provide a complete history of each trophy, along with the list of recipients and a picture of the master trophy. Once the nominations are received, the IAC board of directors votes for the recipients based on a number of criteria, including number and quality of nominations and how closely the nominee meets the requirements for which the award was conceived. 

Recognizing Excellence:



The 2008 winner of the Mike Murphy Cup (presented by IAC Executive Manager Trish Diemer), and the Betty Skelton Trophy, is Debby Rihn-Harvey.



The 2008 Bob Schnuerle winner is Zach Heffley.

AEROBATIC TROPHIES

Mike Murphy Cup

This trophy was conceived and donated by Mike Murphy of Ohio, an aerobatic pioneer and leader in international aerobatics for many years. The first cup was presented in 1974. The award is presented to the winner of the powered Unlimited category. The master trophy is engraved with the recipient's name.

Previous winners of this award include Art Scholl, Leo Laudenslager (7), Henry Haigh, Kermit Weeks (2), Clint McHenry (3), Tom Jones, Pete Anderson, Patty Wagstaff (3), Phil Knight, Mike Goulian, Diane Hakala, Robert Armstrong, Steve Andelin, David Martin, Kirby Chambliss (5), and Vicki Cruse.

The winner of the Mike Murphy Cup for the third time was **Debby Rihn-Harvey** of La Porte, Texas.

Betty Skelton Trophy

This trophy was conceived and donated by Betty Skelton Frankman, pilot of the famous Pitts Little Stinker, an aircraft in the collection of the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. It is presented to the top-placing woman

in the powered Unlimited category at the U.S. Nationals. The award was first presented in 1988. Previous winners of this award include Patty Wagstaff (6), Elena Klimovich, Linda Meyers-Morrissey, Diane Hakala, and Vicki Cruse (2).

The winner of the Betty Skelton Trophy for the tenth time was **Debby Rihn-Harvey** of La Porte, Texas.

Bob Schnuerle Trophy

This trophy was conceived and donated by Florence Schnuerle, Bob's mother. Bob was a pilot on the 1970 U.S. Aerobatic Team, coached the 1972 team, and lost his life practicing for the 1973 U.S. Nationals. He was extremely popular with his fellow pilots, and the 4-Minute Free program was his favorite. The award was first presented in 1985.

Previous winners include Gene Beggs, Harold Chappell, Kermit Weeks (2), Tom Jones, Clint McHenry, Nikolai Nikitiuk, Rick Massagee (2), Phil Knight, Mike Mangold, Kirby Chambliss, Zach Heffley, David Martin (5), and Rob Holland.

The winner of the 2008 Bob Schnuerle Trophy was **Zach Heffley**.

The 2008 IAC AWARDS of MERIT ... Flying



The 2008 Fred Leidig Trophy winner is Bill Denon



The 2008 MT-Propeller Trophy winner is Malcom Pond.

Photos by Laurie Zaleski

Fred Leidig Trophy

This trophy was conceived and donated by Robert Wagstaff of Anchorage, Alaska, and was first awarded in 1991. Fred Leidig was an aerobatic competitor whose job transferred him to Tucson from Ohio, where he continued flying Intermediate in a Hyperbipe he built. He was an outstanding competitor who lost his life in an aerobatic accident in a Christen Eagle in 1990. The trophy is awarded to the highest-scoring Intermediate pilot at the U.S. Nationals. The trophies are funded by Ben Lowell.

Previous winners include Gerry Molidor, Bradley Vidrine, Suzanne Owen, Fred DeLacerda, John Handly, Clyde Cable, Hector Ramirez, Justin Anderson, Mike Wiskus, Larry Reynolds, Todd Whitmer, Doug Bartlett, Bud Judy (2), Kevin Campbell, and Michael Montgomery.

The winner of the Fred Leidig Trophy was **Bill Denon**.

MT-Propeller Trophy

The MT-Propeller Trophy was conceived and donated by Gerd Muehlbauer of MT-Propeller Entwicklung GmbH in Atting, Germany, in 2006 and is presented to the winner of the Advanced category. The winner receives a plaque with a photograph of the permanent trophy set in the plaque. The master trophy, chosen by Gerd and made in Dubai, consists of a gold-plated, crystal eagle with diamonds and is on permanent display at the IAC Pavilion in Oshkosh. The recipient's name is engraved on the master trophy.

Previous winners include Todd Whitmer, Jeff Boerboon, and Hector Ramirez.

The winner was **Malcom Pond**.



The 2008 winner of the Old Buzzard Award is Norm DeWitt.



The 2008 winner of the Chapter Team Trophy is Chapter 26 of Delano, California. The Award was presented to members including John Howell (center) and Jason McDermott (right).

Old Buzzard Award

The Old Buzzard Award is presented in honor of Charles "Chuck" Alley, an active competitor at age 84 who passed away in 2002. This award honors Chuck's accomplishments as a competitor and aims to encourage the senior members of the IAC who aspire to fly like eagles. The award was first presented in 1999 and is given to the top-scoring competitor who is 65 years old or older and completed all flights in any category at the U.S. Nationals. The winner receives a plaque bearing a buzzard's head and inscription, and the master trophy remains on display at the IAC Pavilion in Oshkosh.

Previous winners include Chuck Alley, Joe Haycraft, Bud Judy, John Watkins, D.R. Bales, Tom Adams, Klein Gilhouse, and Clyde Cable.

The winner of the Old Buzzard Award was **Norm DeWitt**.

Chapter Team Trophy

The Chapter Team Trophy is awarded to the IAC chapter whose top three members, regardless of category, achieve the highest average percentage based on all flight programs in that category. In the event of a tie, those chapters' next highest-placing competitor's scores are used.

The trophy has been awarded since 1971 at the IAC Championships and since 1982 at the U.S. Nationals. Winners receive a single plaque to take back to their chapters. There are no master trophies for this award.

Previous winners include the following chapters: 26-California, 88-Michigan (3), 59-Oklahoma, 23-Florida (4), 12-Colorado (2), 1-Illinois (2), 25-Texas, 91-New York, 69-Arizona (2), and 24-Texas.

The winning team was **Chapter 26** of Delano, California.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARDS



The 2008 winner of the Lycoming 180-Horsepower Trophy is Darren Behm.

Lycoming 180-Horsepower Trophy

The Lycoming 180-Horsepower Trophy was conceived by several IAC members to further the grassroots movement within the IAC. The Textron Lycoming Company first donated this trophy in May of 1999. It is awarded to the highest-scoring pilot (percentage-wise) performing in an aircraft with a limited range of horsepower—not to exceed 180 hp. A permanent master trophy is on display at IAC headquarters. The individual winner's name is engraved on the master trophy. The winner also receives an engraved picture plaque of the master trophy.

The winner was **Darren Behm**.



Photos by Laurie Zaleski

The 2008 winner of the Highest-Placing First-Time Sportsman is Wyche T. Coleman.

Highest-Placing First-Time Sportsman

The Highest-Placing First-Time Sportsman award is presented to the Sportsman pilot, power or glider, with the highest percentage of points possible who is flying for the first time at the U.S. Nationals.

The winner was Wyche T. Coleman. 

In addition to the category awards presented at the U.S. Nationals, a number of other flying awards are given. Some of the past winners will bring back memories, and someday you may find yourself added to one of these prestigious lists. The master trophy for each category, with the exception of the Chapter Team Trophy, American Champion Aircraft Trophy and Highest Placing First-Time Sportsman Trophy, is on permanent display at the IAC Pavilion in Oshkosh.



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UNLIMITED CHAMPION is Debby Rihn Harvey flying a CAP 232, second place is Jeff Boerboon (right) and third place is Zach Heffley (left).



ADVANCED CHAMPION is Malcom Pond (right) flying an Edge 540, second place is Reinaldo Beyer (left), and third place is Ben Freelove (not pictured).

Photos by Laurie Zaleski



INTERMEDIATE CHAMPION is Bill Denton (left) flying an Extra 300L, second place is Steve Packer (center), and third place is John Ostmeyer (right).

SPORTSMAN CHAMPION is Wayne Roberts (left) flying a Pitts S-2C, second place is Aaron McCartan (center), and third place is Jason McDermott (right).



The 2009 U.S. National Champions



POWER PRIMARY CHAMPION is Ryan Waller (center) flying a Pitts S-2C, second place is Tony Schuetz (right), and third place is Bruce Latvald (left).



UNLIMITED GLIDER CHAMPION is Paul Jennings flying a Swift S-1.

Unlimited Glider second place is Jason Stephens.



INTERMEDIATE GLIDER CHAMPION is Michael Albert (left) flying a Blanik L13AC, second place is Eric Kunrath (not pictured), and third place is Brandon Burfeind (right).



SPORTSMAN GLIDER CHAMPION is Andrew Lamb (center) flying a Blanik L13AC, second place is Andrea Luethi (right), and third place is Rafael Soldan (left).

CONTEST RESULTS

Rank	Pilot	Aeroplane	Reg.	%	Rank	Pilot	Aeroplane	Reg.	%	
PRIMARY OVERALL						ADVANCED POWER OVERALL				
1	Ryan Waller	Pitts S-2B	N9H	78.12	1	Malcolm Pond	Edge 540	N540SA	79.50	
2	Tony Schuetz	Pitts S-2B	N9H	76.58	2	Reinaldo Beyer	Extra 300L	N779R	79.27	
3	Bruce Latvald	Pitts S-2B	N9NH	70.88	3	Ben Frelove	Extra 300L	N703KC	79.06	
SPORTSMAN POWER OVERALL						4	Michael Gallaway	Pitts S-1T	N991GB	78.00
1	Wayne Roberts	Pitts S-2C	N188PS	83.26	5	Joe Brinker	CAP 232	N930RM	77.99	
2	Aaron McCartan	Pitts S-1T	N230JM	82.67	6	Kelly Adams	Staudacher S300	N804Q	76.72	
3	Jason McDermott	Extra 300	N410WB	82.61	7	Bryan Taylor	Giles G-202	N202NS	75.36	
4	Stan Moye	DR-107	N682HD	82.46	8	Doug Sowder	Extra 300L	N25AP	75.18	
5	John Howell	Extra 300	N300XA	81.84	9	Steve Johnson	MX2	N487MX	74.75	
6	Daniel Franscioni	Giles G-202	BN352S	81.51	10	Bob Freeman	Giles G-200	N200GZ	74.53	
7	Phillip Gragg	Pitts S-1S	N44EW	81.01	11	Craig Dobesh	Pitts S1-XTC	N4477X	74.07	
8	Robert Dierolf	Yak 50	NX5203V	80.55	12	Robbie Gibbs	Extra 230	N230GA	73.21	
9	Jeremy Humphreys	Pitts S-2B	N49LH	79.80	13	Klayton Kirkland	Pitts S-1T	N690AB	72.54	
10	Darren Behm	8KCAB	N330MS	79.78	14	Mark Jacobsen	Pitts S2XX	N52SX	71.08	
11	Daniel Wisehart	Pitts S-2B	N901Z	79.24	15	Victoria Benzing	Extra 300S	N46EX	70.86	
12	George Hendricks	8KCAB	N330MS	79.04	16	Mike Forney	Pitts S-1T	N49306	70.33	
13	Tim Baker	Extra 300	N23EX	79.04	17	Gray Brandt	Pitts S-2B	N1191	69.09	
14	Luke Lambard	Christen Eagle	N21M	78.69	18	Marty Flournoy	Giles G-202	N202GP	68.19	
15	Wyche Coleman Jr.	8KCAB	N595E	78.16	19	Thomas Franscioni	Giles G-202	N352S	67.43	
16	Wm. Marinangel	Laser Z200	N199J	78.12	20	Mark Nowosielski	Giles G-200	N200PJ	63.28	
17	Kathleen Howell	Extra 300	N300XA	78.02	21	Gerrit Nijs	Extra 300	N25AP	60.84	
18	Eliz. Maynard	8KCAB	N330MS	76.07	22	Klein Gilhouse	Extra 330SC	N73KG	57.74	
19	Chris Hill	Pitts S-2B	N49LH	75.61	23	Patrick Dugan	Extra 300	N319PH	48.41	
20	Rick Nutt	Pitts S-2B	N84PS	75.60	ADVANCED POWER TEAM OVERALL					
21	Adam Baker	8KCAB	N330MS	75.03	1	Reinaldo Beyer	Extra 300L	N779R	79.32	
22	D.R. Bales	Extra 200	N811PM	71.31	2	Ben Frelove	Extra 300L	N703KC	78.39	
INTERMEDIATE POWER OVERALL						3	Malcolm Pond	Edge 540	N540SA	77.86
1	Bill Denton	Extra 300L	N53EX	82.79	4	Michael Gallaway	Pitts S-1T	N991GB	76.72	
2	Steve Packer	Staudacher S600	N27KJ	82.62	5	Bob Freeman	Giles G-200	N200GZ	76.22	
3	John Ostmeyer	Pitts S-1T	N230JM	81.55	6	Robbie Gibbs	Extra 230	N230GA	75.45	
4	Andy Macha	Staudacher S300	N9276R	81.45	7	Doug Sowder	Extra 300L	N25AP	74.81	
5	Matthew Tanner	Pitts S-1S	N457CF	80.93	8	Craig Dobesh	Pitts S1-XTC	N4477X	74.68	
6	Mike Plyer	Clipped Cub	N31PP	80.83	9	Kelly Adams	Staudacher S300	N804Q	73.70	
7	Kevin Coleman	Extra 300L	N703KC	79.93	10	Bryan Taylor	Giles G-202	N202NS	73.18	
8	Tom Adams	Staudacher S300	N804Q	79.26	11	Steve Johnson	MX2	N487MX	72.94	
9	Michael Hartenstein	Extra 300	N300XA	79.15	12	Mark Jacobsen	Pitts S2XX	N52SX	70.94	
10	Tom Rhodes Jr.	DR-107	N515PM	77.57	13	Klayton Kirkland	Pitts S-1T	N690AB	69.05	
11	Patrick McAlee	Pitts S-1S	N45TS	77.29	14	Thomas Franscioni	Giles G-202	N352S	68.08	
12	David Honaker	Pitts S-2B	N49LH	75.18	15	Gray Brandt	Pitts S-2B	N1191	67.42	
13	Margo Chase	Extra 300	N319PH	75.10	16	Victoria Benzing	Extra 300S	N46EX	67.33	
14	Dan Tourgee	Extra 300L	N41EX	74.66	17	Marty Flournoy	Giles G-202	N202GP	66.14	
15	Dale Evans	Acroduster	N750X	69.62	18	Mark Nowosielski	Giles G-200	N200PJ	64.24	
16	Bill Gordon	Pitts S-2B	N5310S	25.77	19	Klein Gilhouse	Extra 330SC	N73KG	56.63	
					20	Joe Brinker	CAP 232	N930RM	55.89	
					21	Patrick Dugan	Extra 300	N319PH	53.47	
					22	Mike Forney	Pitts S-1T	N49306	50.40	
					23	Gerrit Nijs	Extra 300	N25AP	43.60	

National Aerobatic Championships at North Texas Regional Airport, September 2009

Rank	Pilot	Aeroplane	Reg.	%	Rank	Pilot	Aeroplane	Reg.	%
UNLIMITED POWER OVERALL									
1	Debby Rihn Harvey	CAP 232	N232DD	80.55	1	Andrew Lamb	Blanik L13AC	N425BA	50.78
2	Jeff Boerboon	Extra 330EX	N73KG	80.21	2	Andrea Luethi	Schleicher ASK2	N215ES	50.46
3	Zach Heffley	Sukhoi 26	N60650	79.24	3	Rafael Soldan	Schleicher ASK2	N215ES	50.31
4	Hubie Tolson	Sukhoi 31	N69SU	77.80	4	Skyler Villers	Blanik L13AC	N425BA	49.74
5	Mike Rinker	Sukhoi 26M	N12SU	76.65	5	Patrick Gill	Blanik L13AC	N425BA	49.68
6	Douglas Bartlett	Edge 540	N540HT	75.33	6	Justin Lennon	Blanik L13AC	N425BA	49.56
7	Hector Ramirez	Extra 300S	N429HR	74.00	7	Mikhail Ponso	Schleicher ASK2	N215ES	49.53
8	Robert Phillips	Sukhoi 26	N926M	73.58	8	Trevor Lockhart	Blanik L13AC	N425BA	48.65
9	Norm DeWitt	Edge 540	N9ND	73.46	9	Kelly Ramsey	Blanik L13AC	N425BA	48.44
10	Wyche Coleman III	Wolfpitts Pro	N703WT	73.16	10	Ryan Waller	Schleicher ASK2	N215ES	48.43
11	Tim Just	Extra 300S	N434TJ	69.82	11	Tyler Hazel	Blanik L13AC	N425BA	46.84
12	Pete Eslick	Sukhoi 31	N31KX	69.72					
13	Rory Moore	MXS	N21MX	65.39					
14	Jeff Stoltenberg	Giles G-200	N1210Y	58.05					
15	Dennis Thompson	Edge 540	N540DT	56.66					
16	Michael Racy	Sukhoi 31	N310BW	52.93					
17	Lew Shattuck	Giles G-200	N105BD	39.22					
UNLIMITED 4 MINUTE FREE									
1	Zach Heffley	Sukhoi 26	N60650	84.77					
2	Debby Rihn Harvey	CAP 232	N232DD	83.38					
3	Wyche Coleman III	Wolfpitts Pro	N703WT	81.84					
4	Paul Jennings	Swift S-1	N114EW	80.63					
5	Hubie Tolson	Sukhoi 31	N69SU	80.24					
6	Mike Rinker	Sukhoi 26M	N12SU	72.73					
7	Rory Moore	MXS	N21MX	68.84					
SPORTSMAN GLIDER OVERALL									
1	Andrew Lamb	Blanik L13AC	N425BA	50.78					
2	Andrea Luethi	Schleicher ASK2	N215ES	50.46					
3	Rafael Soldan	Schleicher ASK2	N215ES	50.31					
4	Skyler Villers	Blanik L13AC	N425BA	49.74					
5	Patrick Gill	Blanik L13AC	N425BA	49.68					
6	Justin Lennon	Blanik L13AC	N425BA	49.56					
7	Mikhail Ponso	Schleicher ASK2	N215ES	49.53					
8	Trevor Lockhart	Blanik L13AC	N425BA	48.65					
9	Kelly Ramsey	Blanik L13AC	N425BA	48.44					
10	Ryan Waller	Schleicher ASK2	N215ES	48.43					
11	Tyler Hazel	Blanik L13AC	N425BA	46.84					
INTERMEDIATE GLIDER OVERALL									
1	Michael Albert	Blanik L13AC	N425BA	78.34					
2	Erich Kunrath	Blanik L13AC	N425BA	77.12					
3	Brandon Burfeind	Blanik L13AC	N425BA	76.40					
4	Scott Hatter	Blanik L13AC	N425BA	72.99					
5	Bryan Johnson	Blanik L13AC	N425BA	69.68					
6	Dan Walker	Blanik L13AC	N425BA	68.22					
7	Daniel Cohoon	Blanik L13AC	N425BA	56.75					
UNLIMITED GLIDER OVERALL									
1	Paul Jennings	Swift S-1	N114EW	76.87					
2	Jason Stephens	Swift S-1	N114EW	74.12					

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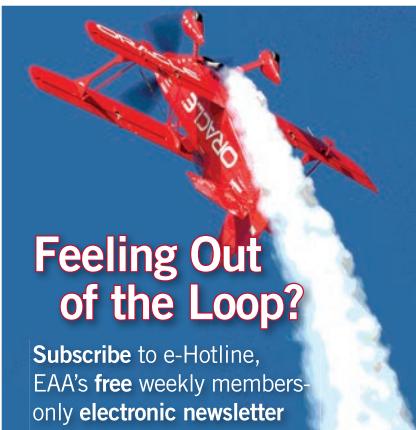
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Ask Allen

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Q: Why do you keep reminding me to protect my parachute from contamination when I ship it?

A: See photo #1! In the past week I've received two parachutes that could have been destroyed in transit. In both cases, the boxes were damaged by water. One box turned to mush, exposing the red carry bag. Just because the sun is shining when you send your parachute doesn't mean it won't be raining during some part of its journey. Winter is upon us and you need to take extra care to protect your parachute during shipment.



The only reason the parachute in photo #1 wasn't damaged is because the owner sent it in a carry bag made from Cordura. This is a very strong material and is pretty much waterproof. The second parachute arrived in a similarly water-damaged box, but was not protected by a carry bag. I had to hang this parachute up for two days to properly air and dry it. Fortunately, neither parachute was damaged. If they had been exposed to something other than water, the outcome could have been worse.

In addition to the water damage, this same box (see photo #2) was coming apart at its seam. Most shipping boxes have one corner that is glued together. Over time the glue dries out and fails. Not only was this box on its last legs, but the water weakened this area, and it came apart. Use tape liberally and don't forget this weak spot.

This is your expensive cushion. If you don't have a carry bag, think about purchasing one. At the very least, put it in a plastic garbage bag to protect it. Maybe do both. Also make sure you have your address with the parachute in case the box and parachute get separated.

Q: I'm often asked, "What does your shop look like?"

A: Usually a mess... only kidding. Those of you who've been to my shop know I keep my tools shadow boxed, and the rest of my shop is usually pretty neat and orderly. I allow no one to place anything on my packing table that could contaminate a parachute. After each

repack, I count the tools I use to pack your parachute and make sure they are back in their proper place (see shadow box photo). I want to ensure I haven't misplaced one in your parachute. After all, it's expensive to replace tools.

As you enter my shop and go up the stairs, you'll notice several photos on the wall. I call this my "Wall of Flame". Some of the photos are of pilots standing next to their aircraft after a successful bailout. As you get to the top of my steps, you see the "Smiley Face" and my shop motto. Next is my office area. One photo actually shows me packing a parachute. The others show the various sewing machines needed to maintain your equipment properly. I also allow customers to send me photos of their aircraft for my rogue's gallery wall. It's much nicer than wallpaper.

I would like to wish everyone a wonderful Holiday Season and a Happy New Year. As a resolution for next year, how about joining me and keeping alive the great work that Vicki Cruse accomplished. She was a tiny lady and may have worn small shoes, but it'll take very large ones to fill her position. She was passionate about "Sport Aerobatics" magazine. One thing you could help with is to contribute your questions and suggestions to the people who put all this together. I know you have some great questions and ideas out there, so come forward with them or contribute an article yourself. We need quality material to produce this quality magazine. Happy Holidays. ☺



1. Allen packing a parachute.

2. The shadow box used to keep track of tools.

3. The "rogue's gallery."

4. Part of the sewing area.

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Not shown: Mike Heuer (Treasurer), Allyson Parker-Lauck (Secretary), Randy Reinhardt (Director), Tom Adams (Director), Louis Andrew (Director), Trish Deimer (Manager)

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