

SPORT *Aerobatics*

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OFFICIAL MAGAZINE of the INTERNATIONAL AEROBATIC CLUB



**Giles Henderson
2012 IAC Hall of
Fame Inductee**



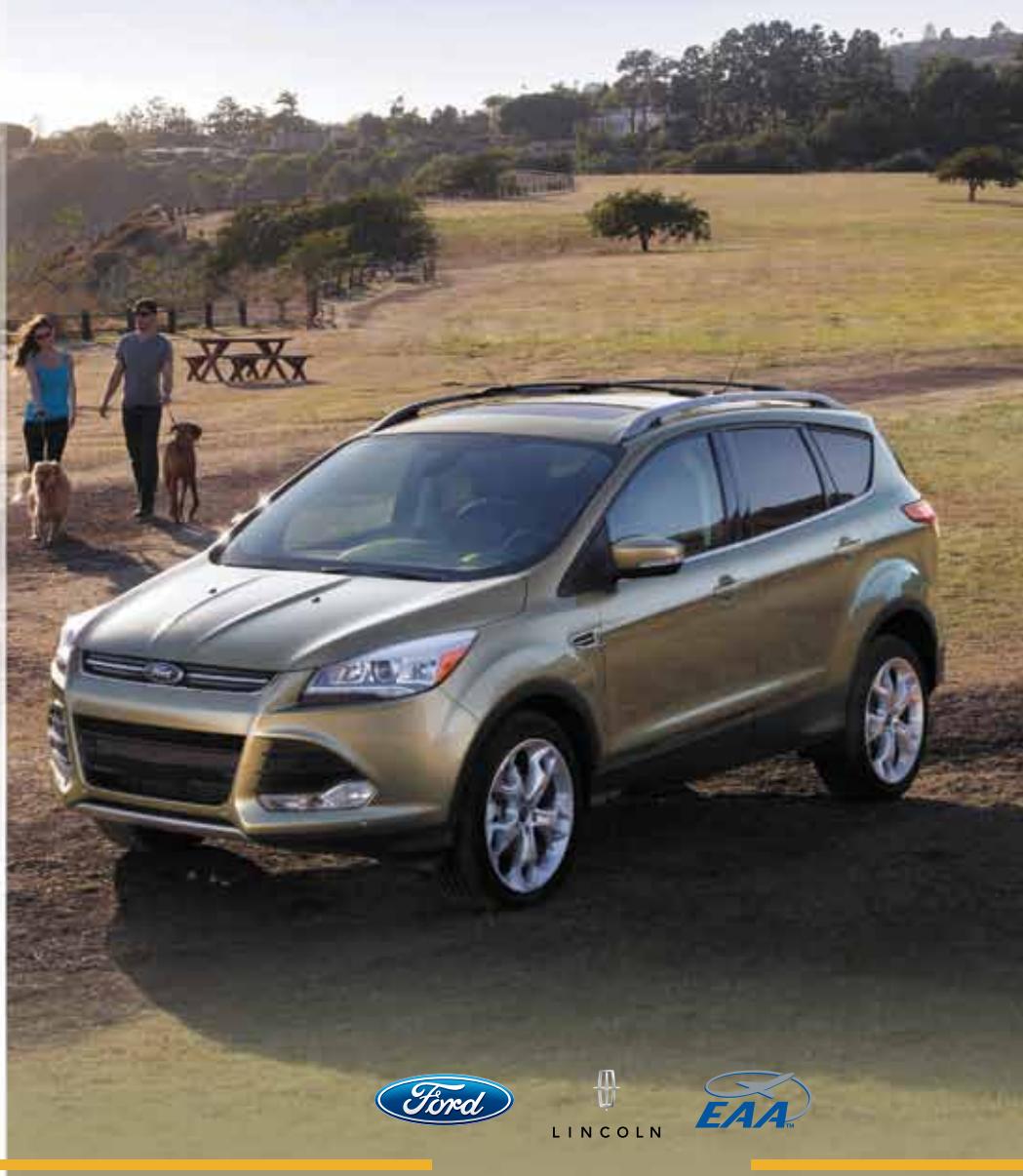
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THE COVER

Our cover's background is a popular photo of Giles Henderson's plane that was used in many IAC promotional pieces. See article on page 4 for an in depth look at IAC's most recent Hall of Fame inductee.

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REGGIE PAULK

COMMENTARY / EDITOR'S LOG

Congratulations Giles

Future of IAC holds opportunities

IF YOU'RE READING THIS, THEN

we've all survived the end of the Mayan calendar that was to bring the apocalypse. I read that some parts of the world had a run on candles—whatever that means! Welcome to 2013, and the beginning of a great year in the sport of aerobatics.

son is one of those individuals.

I am always a little taken aback by the depth of education and experience our inductees have amassed over their years in the industry and Giles is no exception. After following his many aviation pursuits over the years, I was surprised to learn that he has a PhD in mechanical physics, and spent the majority of his time pursuing the intricacies of particles that only exist for minute fractions of a second here on earth. You almost wonder how he found the time to pursue aerobatics with the passion and dedication required to earn four national championship titles. I hope you enjoy reading his story as much as I enjoyed writing it!

This month, Wayne Roberts introduces us to the IAC's upcoming website release. I had the honor of participating as part of what we dubbed the "WEB team," and was again impressed with the level of technical expertise some of our members demonstrated in order to bring this project to fruition. Mr. Roberts proved to be an excellent team leader and kept us on task through our many meetings and growing pains. I would like to join him in thanking the individuals he calls out in his piece. They not only contributed time and effort to the project, but continue to do so. I would be proud to work on a team with you any time!

IAC

This month,

Wayne Roberts

introduces us to the

IAC's upcoming

website release.

This year will see the Unlimited World Aerobic Championship on U.S. soil at the same place we hold Nationals. I look forward to following our team and watching them march toward what I envision to be the gold this year. They did wonderfully in 2011, and I've got a feeling that 2013 will be amazing.

As you've seen by the cover of this issue, we are featuring our newest IAC Hall of Fame inductee. A wonderful perk of this job is that I get the privilege of speaking with people whom I've always considered to be heroes in the aviation realm, and Giles Hender-

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



Modification to aerobatic practice

Keeping up with changes

Big News on Aerobatic Practice Area Guidance!

December 12, 2012 - Today, at the International Council of Air Shows ICAS) annual convention, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) National Aviation Events Specialist (NAES), Susan Gardner, announced upcoming changes to FAA regulatory policy and guidance.

Among those changes are much anticipated and, long sought by the IAC, significant modifications to aerobatic practice area (APA) guidance found in FAA Order 8900.1, Volume 3, Chapter 5.

With the issuance of new, revised FAA guidance, expected in early 2013, we may anticipate the following:

1. Elimination of the 500' APA floor restriction encountered during 2012. (Effective immediately and revised waivers are presently being issued to affected waiver applicants.)

2. APA waiver maximum term extended to three (3) years.

3. For ninety-five percent (95%) of APA waiver applicants, it is anticipated that, when the final policy is published, Environmental Assessment (EA) will no longer be required.

At AirVenture, earlier this year, IAC once again renewed our requests to the FAA in this regard. It was also at AirVenture this year that newly returned FAA National Aviation Events Specialist, Ms. Sue Gardner, called together representatives of both ICAS and IAC to begin working together to address these, and other, important issues, all vital to our sport.

We appreciate the patience of our members, and are very appreciative of the efforts and hard work of the FAA, and of all involved. We will continue to

work with our friends at the FAA in the coming days to craft revised guidance documents, and to train both waiver applicants and FAA personnel relative to these upcoming changes.

Dr. W. B. Finagin
National Representative
IAC Government Relations Committee

Agenda Packets Posted

December 10, 2012 - The agenda packets from the latest IAC Board of Directors meetings have been posted in the Members Only area of the website. Look for them toward the bottom of the homepage in the Leadership section.

IAC Wants Your Email Address

Update your member information!

The IAC would love to collect your email address. If we don't have it, you are missing out on a valuable part of your membership benefits. In the Loop, is our monthly e-newsletter which is emailed to you with the latest information and interests. You can also update your address, telephone and other information all at the same place. Do it all right here. <https://secure.eaa.org/apps/joinrenew/address.aspx>



2012 Hall of Fame Inductee **Giles Henderson**

by Reggie Paulk with Giles Henderson

Growing up in Western Montana, Giles Henderson (pronounced with a 'g,' not a 'j,' sound) became enamored with airplanes at a young age.

"I was raised on a remote ranch," he begins. "A J-3 Cub landed in a pasture, and the pilot left the aircraft and caught a ride into town with a friend. I remember hiking up a hill and across a field to get close to this Cub and look it over, and it absolutely fascinated me. I waited and waited, but

the pilot didn't come back in a timely manner. I went back home and, in the distance, I saw him take off. That was probably my first contact with aviation and airplanes. I later remember seeing an aircraft doing loops up real high and was just fascinated with the idea of doing aerobatics. Those memories were probably from when I was 6 or so years old."

Giles saved up the money he made while working summers at his family's ranch. By the fall of 1959, 16-year-old Giles plopped all the money he'd

saved onto the counter at a fixed base operator (FBO) in Great Falls, Montana, and declared he wanted to learn how to fly an airplane.

"I acquired an Aeronca Champ when I was 16 years old," he says. "I had a job working for the FBO fueling aircraft and sweeping up hangars. I was basically a ramp rat. My salary was divided; half of my salary went to payments on the airplane and fuel. I had an airplane long before I had a car, and I worked at the airport after school and got paid extra to work at

My personal involvement was the car-to-plane transfer and the low-level aerobatic act; both using the Cub.

night. I had a bunk in an old World War II hangar, and when an aircraft would come in for service in the wee hours, the tower would call me and I would go out and fuel the airplane. Being on call allowed my operator to have service 24/7."

By the time he was old enough to qualify for his pilot certificate, Giles had acquired 300-400 hours of flight time in his Aeronca as a student pilot. "I took my checkride on my birthday."

After three years, he sold his first Champ and bought another setup for crop dusting. Later, he acquired a half-interest in a Harvard Mk II.

"It was a Canadian air force trainer; like a T-6 with minor differences in instrumentation and the fuel system. I soon discovered I couldn't afford the fuel. Neither my partner nor I realized how much it was going to cost when we acquired it. We only had it for a short time."

Although he started out with the goal of pursuing aviation as a profession, a chance lunch encounter with a pilot friend who happened to be a college student set him on a different path.

"The consequences of that lunch encounter convinced me I ought to be going to school," he says. "As it turned out, I had some very influential professors, and I had a good aptitude for mathematics and science. My training was in the area of chemistry, physics, and mathematics. I wound up with a Ph.D. in molecular physics, and my academic career was a mix of teaching in graduate programs, higher-level courses, and research."

Giles' research focus was in spectroscopy, where he'd study the absorption and emission of electromagnetic radiation by molecules and atoms. This allowed his associates and him to draw an exquisite picture of molecular structure.

"With the technology available today," he says, "we've been able to study some very exotic species with very short lifetimes. Species with a transient state that occurs in chemical reactions and only exists for a few microseconds."

Those of us who know Giles through aviation might be surprised to learn that he spent the majority of his time studying the electromagnetic properties of exotic chemicals on Earth and deep space.

"My world was a Jekyll and Hyde kind of thing," he adds. "Nine months of the year, I was in the laboratory and classroom at the chalkboard. Three months of the year, I was off flying air shows or flying contests or judging."

In 1966, Giles and two partners bought the Piper J-3 Cub that could easily be considered synonymous with his name.

"When I moved to Illinois in 1966, I acquired the Cub that I have today," he remembers. "At that time, it was a stock Cub with a 65-hp engine and a wood prop; a standard J-3 Cub. I originally bought the airplane with two partners, but one bailed out as soon as I started talking about getting a saw and



cutting the wings off to convert it to a clipped-wing Cub. He wanted his money back, so it was down to two of us. The other partner stuck it out until about 1970."

Giles began flying competitively in his stock Cub as a member of the Aerobatic Club of America (ACA). Founded by Pappy Spinks in 1964, his mission was to have the U.S. properly represented in world competition. With a primary focus on the Unlimited category and U.S. World team members, his interest in grassroots aerobatics was minor.

"It was probably that philosophy, and the way the club ran that reflected that philosophy, that caused some of the people to

think about another club with an emphasis on grassroots elements," he says. "The IAC started out under the EAA with Bob Heuer as president in 1970."

In his years as a member of the ACA, Giles competed in his stock Cub.

"We had a three-category format," he reflects. "The Primary category at that time was approximately equivalent to what we call Sportsman today. There was an Advanced category and an Unlimited category. The Unlimited category was more like the Advanced category today. The aircraft we saw competing represented a very broad spectrum. There were

World War II airplanes and many modified clipped-wing Cubs, Taylorcraft, and Luscombes. There were a lot of biplanes: the Wacos, Stearmans, and Great Lakes."

Given such a wide range of aircraft and capabilities, it wasn't uncommon for people to omit figures from the obligatory sequence if they

were beyond the capability of the airplane or pilot's expertise.

"It turned out if you could do all the maneuvers, you were probably in the running," he says and laughs.

After the formation of the International Aerobatic Club, Giles competed at the Nationals in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, the next year.

"In 1971, I competed in my Cub with the stock engine," he says. "The wings had been clipped, but the engine was original. I won Nationals in that configuration. As I recall, there were 30-40 contestants in the Sportsman category that year. Winning at Nationals with a 65-horse airplane was a biggy. I won that, and it hasn't been done since."

In 1975, after adding 25 hp to his Cub, Giles again won the Sportsman category at the Nationals against a huge field of 51 competitors. Today, the airplane still has the Continental C-90 that made the airplane a contender well into the '80s. But clipped wings and higher horsepower aren't the only mods that have been performed on the airplane.

"We did a lot of strange things to get airplanes to run upside down," Giles says. "A friend had a modi-



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fied Stromberg carb with a hose that ran into the cockpit, and he'd clip it to his lapel. When he'd go upside down, he'd stick the hose in his mouth and blow. He had a sardine can soldered to the side of the float bowl, and somehow it would squirt fuel into the thing and make it work. We had people with fuel cans in the

landing gear that would fill up with fuel when they were upright. When they were turned upside down, they'd get fuel to the induction system through some kind of metering nozzle. You would just tune

the throttle until you had a happy mixture. This was before we had pressure carburetors or reliable fuel-injection systems. Some pilots even had two carburetors; one would run right side up, and the other would run upside down. The Bucker Jungmeister was set up that way. A gravity-operated flapper valve would select

carb authority, and it worked fine as long as you were positive or negative. If you were at 0g or knife edge, it didn't know which carb to use and sometimes coughed and blubbered."

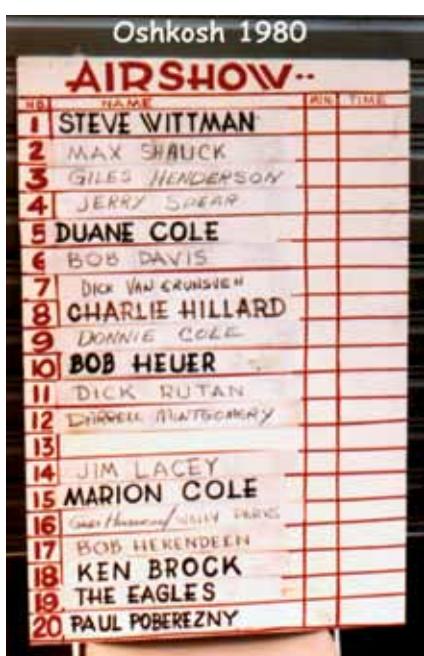
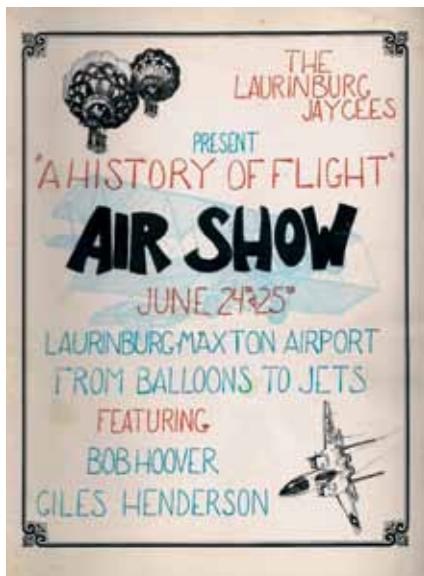
Clipping the wing of the Cub is a process that increases performance in a number of categories.

"My original modification to the Cub was to shorten the wings," says Giles. "You do that by removing the root end, not the tip. The wing moves inboard, and the strut, designed for tensile loads only, makes a steeper angle with the wing. It's more favorably braced for negative g's. Nearly the entire trailing edge of

the wing becomes aileron, so the roll rate increased substantially. Power is still an issue, and lack of inverted power, in some sequences, is a real big issue."

On a Cub, the landing gear creates an enormous amount of parasitic drag. Giles modified his landing gear to eliminate much of that drag while retaining the classic looks of the airplane.

"The original Cub landing gear has bungees for shock absorbers and round tubing," he says. "The first thing I did with the gear was to get rid of all that and replace the round tubing in the cabane structure with



The low-powered Cub represented challenges throughout his flying career, and Giles has been a major force in designing sequences to accommodate the genre.

streamlined tubing. The coefficient of drag on a round tube is almost an order of magnitude larger than a streamlined tube; it's almost mind-boggling. Replacing the bungees and putting streamlined tubing in the landing gear increased airspeed more than if I'd cut 10 feet from the wings! The gear legs have fabric spanning from the leading edge tube to the trailing-edge tubes, and the legs are in the prop wash, causing the fabric to drum in flight. This causes a flexing at the tangent of the tube the fabric wraps around. Typically, two or three years after a new cover job, you get a crack in the finish right along the edge of those tubes. My solution was to make some ribs in the gear legs to give the leg an aerodynamic shape. It reduces the drag and eliminates the drumming and vibration that cause the finish to crack."

Giles considered other mods for his Cub, such as smaller wheels and Cleveland brakes. He also thought about putting a PA-11 pressure cowl over the engine. Although these mods would improve performance "big time," he didn't like what they did to the airplane's appearance.

"It just doesn't look like a Cub when you do those things," he says. "Back when I started flying, most of the senior aviation people had learned to fly during World War II or right after the war in the J-3 Cub. There was a huge nostalgia connected with the Cub that's gradually gone away. I was sensitive to that and didn't really want the airplane to deviate significantly in appearance to that of the classic Cub."

The reason Giles concerned himself so much with the appearance of his Cub is because he flew it as part of an air show act in front of thou-

sands of people during the summer months between school years.

"We put together an air show package," he says. "The idea was to market a complete air show, mainly to small Midwest communities. We had a whole program; an announcer and audio system, warbirds, hot air balloons, a sky diver and flag job we'd circle with two airplanes and smoke, low-level aerobatics, a comedy act, and a 1908 Demoiselle and a car transfer act. It was a complete package. If a community signed on the dotted line, they'd have an air show. That was very appealing to a lot of small communities who didn't have the experience or the in-house expertise to put together an air show, so it was pretty successful. We marketed this thing to Illinois and Indiana and around our local area. Some of our communities would have us back year after year. My personal involvement was the car-to-plane transfer and the low-level aerobatic act; both using the Cub."

"We actually used a pickup truck. Our sky diver would be in the back of the truck, and I had a rope ladder attached to the airplane. The bottom rung was actually a streamlined piece of tubing full of lead which kept the ladder very stable. I just put that lower rung in the back of the pickup and when I heard the whistle, I'd think, 'We're good to go.' He'd hang upside down by his legs and wave at the crowd while I flew camera passes. Then he'd climb up into the airplane and haul the ladder back up."

"We started that program in the mid '70s, and it lasted about 15 years. I flew air shows the three months I wasn't teaching and in the lab."

For Giles, aerobatics—especially

competition aerobatics—didn't come easy.

"I never had the benefit of coaching," he says. "That is something that can make a huge difference. It was a long process to try to convert the image of what I saw in the airplane into a concept of what the airplane was doing on the outside. It's really important to be able to look outside and have an accurate idea of what the airplane looks like on the ground. It's a skill that takes time to develop, and there are aspects that are subtle."

"Take the Cub for example. If you watch somebody do a buzz job down the runway as it's flying level, it actually looks like it's diving. Now put the airplane in a vertical line, and it looks like it's positive and the judges are going to call it positive. You have to compensate those things in order to make it conform to our grading criteria. If you're going to make a vertical line, you have to go 14 degrees past vertical in the upline. The

downline requires adjustments and so on; subtle adjustments like that."

Today's pilots have it somewhat easier than those who started competition aerobatics of yore.

"Those of us who learned to fly in the early days really had to learn how to deal with crosswind corrections," he begins. "The early sequences almost never had cross-box figures in the Sportsman sequence. They were all up and down the X-axis; nothing on the Y-axis."

The low-powered Cub represented challenges throughout his flying career, and Giles has been a major force in designing sequences to accommodate the genre.

"With low-powered aircraft, the biggest part of the game is energy management," he says. "That's a right-handed (stick) thing not a left-handed (throttle) thing. It's a matter of allocating very carefully the altitude in exchange for energy when you need it. The finesse of energy management is the single biggest is-

sue of the low powered guy. It's still important to me that proper thought is given to a sequence that will enable us to measure airmanship and not performance. We often lose sight of that, and we have maneuvers sequenced in such a way we can't transition from one maneuver to another with sufficient energy. It unfairly handicaps low-powered aircraft and takes a lot of serious thought and consideration to come up with sequences to avoid the issue. After all, it really doesn't matter what horsepower the engine is; it's how round is the loop?"

Finding the proper balance of sequence to accommodate the varying aircraft at lower levels is important for other reasons as well.

"One concern I have is the perception that potential members have of our competitions," he begins. "They fly to a contest as an observer. They may have a Citabria or whatever, and they may volunteer to get involved with the logistics of the contest, but

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

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Paul Poberezny and Giles Henderson

they don't actively compete. Many times, they leave with the perception that, 'Oh golly, I can't even fly Sportsman unless I've got a [composite] monoplane! I think that's a problem we're confronted with today."

In 1991, Giles retired from air show and serious competition flying to pursue physical challenges such as wilderness backpacking, spelunking and scuba diving. As he approached retirement from academics in 2000, he began to ponder another airplane.

"I was contemplating how my lifestyle was going to change when I retired from academics and thought I needed a transition project," he says. "I needed something that would keep my hands and mind occupied when I left my regular work environment. I had flown a couple Cassutts years ago and had an indelible memory of the thrill of flying that little airplane. I thought it would be cool to try to restore one, so I located a couple potential projects and thought I should make sure what I was getting into before I committed to it.

Pete Myers was probably one of the two most experienced Cassutt pilots in the world, and I knew him much better than the other person. Over a period of weeks, I accumulated a long list of questions and wrote them down on a piece of paper, then I called him. He patiently answered all those questions, and at the end of the conversa-

tion, he said, 'You're serious about a Cassutt.' I said, 'Yes sir, I am.' He said, 'Why don't you just come get mine?' I just about dropped the telephone because I assumed it would end up in the EAA museum along with his clipped-wing Cub. I felt honored and privileged he was talking about having me own the airplane. So I went and brought the airplane home, completely tore it down, and rebuilt it. As I was getting ready to paint the fuselage, it caught fire and burned to the ground.

"Luckily the wings weren't on the airplane, so I had a bare steel fuselage and not much else to work with. I cleaned the fuselage to bare steel and replaced all of the hardware. Eventually, the airplane did get back to flying.

"I made three takeoffs and landings and then called Pete to ask if he was going to lunch. He said he didn't have any plans, so I said I'd fly up and buy him lunch. I flew the airplane up there, and he was really happy to see that it had been restored nicely and it had a good home."

After a couple of years of retirement, having pursued non-aviation interests, guilt began to creep into Giles's conscience.

"I owed this club a lot," says Giles. "So I went to judges school and got credentials to judge. Once I had the Cassutt flying, it was just ideal transportation. It was cheap, cruised at 180 miles an hour. I could zip to a



contest wherever they needed help judging; whatever. I did that for a season or two and thought I would throw my hat in the ring for Primary or Sportsman, just for fun.

"I'm sure it's a challenge for the judges, because it's just a dot up there. For such a small airplane, it makes a relatively large loop. The diameter is about 1,200 feet, and the entry speeds are about 180-200. At those speeds, it's difficult to keep it confined to the box. You're sitting with your head more or less in the middle of the wing, so it totally obstructs your downward visibility. You can't tell for sure what county you're over, let alone where the little box is! You have to wait until you're upside down or pointed at the ground to get a glimpse of the box. Everything else is basically timing. On the Cub, it's not a problem at all keeping it in the box. The diameter of a loop in the Cub is about 400 feet.

"We've got a new IAC member, Tom O'Neil, who just completed a Cassutt project with inverted fuel and oil. The two of us have been flying at the same contests. It's kind of cool because we've got two Cassutts and they're both yellow."

As a four-time national Sportsman champion and four-time winner of the Gene Soucy Award (a record), Giles Henderson has been a driving force and ambassador of low-powered aerobatic competition from the inception of the IAC. He continues to lend his talents and his expertise to the club. If you see a little yellow dot streaking to a contest someday, don't be surprised if that yellow dot materializes into a Cassutt and Giles Henderson steps onto the ramp.

IAC

The 2012 Nationals

A glider pilot's perspective

BY LUKAS VON ATZIGEN

A black and white photograph of a glider in flight. The glider is seen from a low angle, looking up at its long wings and tail. The background is a vast, cloudy sky. The glider's registration number, N59SZ, is visible on the vertical stabilizer.

For a year I've been preparing for the 2012 National Aerobatic Championships. Glider trailer painted; check. New tires on the trailer; check. Glider modification completed; check. Practice, practice, practice...check, check, check. Signing a check each time. Finally the time has come to saddle up and hit the road. As I'm hooking up the glider trailer to my car, I start looking forward to seeing all the colleagues that I haven't seen over the past year. Finally, it is time to hit the road for the 800-mile journey to Sherman-Denison, Texas.

This year my practice sessions at the Chilhowee Gliderport near Benton, Tennessee, worked out very well with my aero tow budget. Power pilots may have the misconception



Aerobatic glider pilots are a rare species . . . This being the case, practice sessions can be rather solitary even when there is a crowd gathered to watch.

that glider pilots don't have a financial impact since they don't have to pay for avgas; however, while the expense may not be as great, there is one encountered in tows. If glider pilots are lucky, they will find a thermal they can ride. Fortunately for me, I had several great thermal days that allowed me stay aloft for several hours from a single 2,000-foot aero tow. This afforded me the opportunity to fit multiple sequences into the same flight. For practicing aerobatics, I typically tow to 5,000 feet for extra altitude at the bottom. A glider sequence lasts about three minutes, which on a flat day could mean several 5,000-foot tows just to practice a few sequences. When the soaring gods are smiling upon

glider pilots, we are blessed with thermally active days that allow us to stay aloft long enough to get in five to six sequences on a 2.5-hour flight; essentially, a buy one get five free. However, there is a disadvantage of days with strong lift in that the turbulence is greater, creating more stress on the pilot and leaving less margin for error and pushing the glider's limitations. The advantage to this is that it does prepare you for such weather conditions during a contest...which was definitely encountered during Nationals.

Aerobatic glider pilots are a rare species as there aren't very many of us and we're spread across the nation. This being the case, practice sessions can be rather solitary even

when there is a crowd gathered to watch. As we don't have box markings near our glider port, I have to guess the boundaries of the box, and critiques from non-aerobatic pilots are limited to, "WOW! That looked great; how did you do that?" So, when surrounded by knowledgeable colleagues at the contest it is both invigorating and humbling. As a glider pilot I truly appreciate the infrastructure that has been created largely in part by the power aerobatics community. I consider myself very fortunate to be able to take advantage of the resources, to learn and grow, since the soaring community doesn't have the critical mass of members that could pull off a contest of this magnitude on its own.

The glider operation at North Texas Regional took place midfield on the closed runway on the west side of the airport. This way we could stage the gliders on the run-

way, ready to hook up and go. This location provided us with the flexibility to take off and land in either direction. It also helped with the rotation of gliders with multiple pilots. They landed on the first part of the runway and rolled out to the same spot where they took off. This saved time since we did not have to push the gliders back to the starting point after their landing.

The integration of gliders in the contest over the years has worked fairly well for the most part. All of us glider pilots are very appreciative to be part of such a prestigious event such as the IAC Nationals; however, as with anything, there is always room for improvement. We had a few instances where some of the glider pilots had to spend a long time on tow. Some tows exceeded a half-hour by far. In addition to being very uneconomic for the aero tow provider, it can be very challenging for both the glider and tow pilots. As a pilot that flies both power planes and gliders I can attest that the amount of concentration to fly on tow is increased exponentially and is incredibly taxing when in a situation where the conditions are adverse, coupled with extensive tow times. The climb to altitude is the easy part since the tow plane is operated with the throttle all the way open and the trim remains fairly constant. It becomes a bit trickier once at altitude, and the pilots are forced to hold in pattern before entering the box. When there are a lot updrafts and downdrafts, the tow pilot has to adjust power to maintain altitude, and these adjustments can cause a slack in the tow rope that has to be counteracted by the glider pilot with a slip. If not properly maneuvered by experienced pilots, the slack in the towrope can become excessive and the rope could potentially wrap around the glider's wing, blocking ailerons, damaging the wing, and preventing the release of the towrope and ending in a disaster.

During my tow for the Advanced Unknown we had a lot of thermal activity. Upon reaching 4,000 feet, the





tow pilot reduced power to maintain altitude. The air was extremely turbulent, and we were still climbing. The power adjustments caused a big slack in the towrope, so I became pretty busy deploying spoilers and slipping hard to counteract the rope slack. At one point just to maintain altitude, the tow pilot had to initiate an exaggerated descent. It is unusual to be on the same level as the tow plane, so looking at its belly from this angle was a little disconcerting. At this point, for the safety of myself and my tow pilot, I was seconds away from releasing and landing. Finally, I was relieved from the situation and called into the box after at least 10 minutes of white-knuckled terror. Even then, I had to keep full spoilers to get down to the top of the box before I could even start my sequence. To provide a perspective of the strength of thermal lift this day, on a typical day I would use a minimum of 2,500 feet for the se-

quence I flew, but I only burned approximately 1,200 feet. While glider pilots wish for such thermal lift and are prepared for the turbulence that accompanies the lift, throwing in weather conditions that accompanied the rain showers that developed in the area and a sudden 180-degree wind change can create a stressful situation for any pilot. The thermal lift and turbulence encountered this day was created by the adverse weather brewing, yet the same can happen on days with extreme heat. For a glider pilot, staying up on tow for extended times during devilish heat can also prove intolerable for numerous reasons. I must say that Mother Nature definitely tested the skills of each glider pilot due to the fickle weather she provided. When we arrived on the Friday before the contest and for most of the week, the weather was more than 100°F, but by the end we were drenched with enough rain to strangle a toad.

After a two-year hiatus, the Unlimited category was back in the lineup with three very talented pilots: Jason Stephens, Klein Gilhouse, and Paul Jennings. With the addition of the Advanced Glider category this year, we had a full panel of pilots ready to compete in each division. As in the past years, the U.S. Air Force Academy showed up with many talented young cadets anxiously anticipating the start of the competition. The USAFA provided the majority of the competing glider pilots that once again taught me the true meaning of sportsmanship. These young pilots, the future of America, were somewhat handicapped flying their shiny new DG-1000s with a 60-foot wingspan and a roll rate that can be compared to a hippopotamus lazily rolling in the pond on a sunny day. Yet, they proved to be very impressive with their performances in the air and on the ground.

While Jason Stephens soared



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into first place in the Unlimited category, the Advanced and Intermediate glider categories were each dominated by two non-U.S. citizens. IAC rules state that non-U.S. citizens can receive medals for each flight sequence they place first, second, or third in, but they cannot receive the overall trophy or title. If a non-U.S. citizen places, then the overall trophy/title is awarded to the next place U.S. citizen. I placed first in the Advanced category, and Mikhael Ponso placed first in the Intermediate category. Since we are both non-U.S. citizens these awards were presented to the two USAFA cadets who placed after us in our categories.

The soaring community, while competitive, is also rather small and tightknit. In many sports there is a cutthroat mentality; yet, in the world of gliders, there is camaraderie second to none. We always look out for each other and go above and beyond to help out another pilot. We truly want to see each other excel. Although each member of the USAFA team was courteous, polite,

respectful, and a pleasure to compete with, I was very humbled by the actions of USAFA Cadets Connor Deebel and James Bloch. These two young men represent the true meaning of sportsmanship. Immediately after accepting the trophies, these young men handed their trophies, without hesitation and prompting from their superiors, to Mikhael Ponso and me, stating, "Sir, you earned this." Personally, I was moved and overwhelmed at the level of respect and consideration these gentlemen made. As foreigners, we don't fly for the national championship title; we know we are not eligible. We participate in the IAC Nationals for fun and because of our passion for aerobatics.

The final highlight of the week was the 4-Minute Free performances. We were treated to spectacular flying by Rob Holland, Debby Rihn-Harvey, Robert Armstrong, and Francis Barros. A true treat for us glider pilots was to watch Paul Jennings' 4-Minute Free performance. With smoke cans on each

wing and tail enhancing the visibility of his glider, we were able to view his great sequence and truly see the impressiveness of his snap-roll maneuvers. Since every glider routine starts on top of the box and ends on the bottom of the box, the smoke definitely helped the visibility of the glider throughout his routine.

After a week of half-Cubans, tail slides, snap rolls, admiring planes, and visiting with fellow pilots, it is time to disassemble the glider and pack up the trailer so we can head east. As I am hooking up the glider trailer in the pouring rain, I feel sorry for all the power pilots who have to wait out the weather for their journey home. Then the true pilot in me has a pang of envy as I realize they will have a direct route free of speed limits and traffic, and they will be above the clouds where all of us who were born with the passion of flight truly feel peace and happiness. I'm already looking forward to living the dream again at next year's contest with the hope of seeing even a larger number of glider pilots.

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The IAC's New WEB Presence

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AS AEROBATIC COMPETITORS, ONE COMMON, FAMILIAR, and very happy circumstance, during virtually every contest flight unless we happen to be flying low lines or playing "wind dummy," is that period of time when we once again find ourselves comfortably airborne and, finally, all alone with our trusted aircraft, and our thoughts.

We departed the stifling heat and sweltering humidity of the tarmac precisely when released by the starter. No time to waste. We don't want the judges to have to sit in the sun and wait for us. Leaving the runway, we made sure to lift off smoothly and smartly. We made sure to bank and turn as crisply as possible. It may be one or more of the judges saw us. If so, it may be they are suitably impressed. And now, having climbed as quickly as possible into the aerobatic hold specified during the category briefing, we loiter, await-

ing our turn in the box with throttle reduced to some appropriately low, low cruise setting to conserve precious fuel and prop pulled way back to, at least for a moment longer, somewhat lessen the din.

Circling there, we keep an ever watchful eye out for traffic as we check, and double-check, our belts, helmet, gauges, sequence card, everything while we draw lazy circle after lazy circle in the cooler, drier, and thankfully much more comfortable air found at the prescribed altitude of the aerobatic hold. It's a time of relative calm, and we gratefully enjoy the respite. We are relaxed but alert to every vibration of the engine, every sound. We can hear the flying wires singing softly. It's comforting. Our aircraft is communicating with us, speaking to us, reassuring us.

We need that small reassurance as we are also, perhaps,

"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."

(Proverbs 25:11, KJV)

just the tiniest bit anxious as we await that inevitable call, clearing us into the box. But, for now, this is okay, this is enough. We've got this! We're ready to go, just as soon as we receive that much anticipated call. Just as soon as we hear those words from the chief judge, "You are cleared into the box! Have a great flight!" This is the communication, the word, we were waiting for. So, here we go!

As competitors, you know exactly what I'm talking about. You've been there. But, I'll be willing to bet that, if you've been a competitor for any significant length of time at all, you've also experienced that wee small thread of nagging doubt that inevitably begins to creep in when, still in the hold after having flown numerous circuits (How many? Who can tell? We didn't count.), after having checked and rechecked every element, after, for the umpteenth time, having reviewed the sequence card, the sequence you know by heart and could recite, without error, even in your sleep... you've heard absolutely nothing from the chief judge.

For many long minutes, far too long we think, the radio has remained stubbornly, mockingly silent. Our sense of calm has left us, evaporated into the thin air around us. Questions begin to quickly race through our minds. Has my headset or radio failed? Or, have I lost my antennas? Has something happened on the ground or in the air of which I'm unaware? Is something wrong? Should I call? Should I land? Or, should I just sit tight and wait a bit longer? What should I do now? Why doesn't the chief judge call?

Timely and well-considered communications, "words fitly spoken," are an absolutely essential element of the successful human experience in all aspects of our lives, including within the ranks of the organizations with which we align ourselves, and to which we commit our support. Communication can be informative, educational, encouraging, reassuring, comforting, inspiring, motivational, even a beautiful thing. But, lines of communication are also tenuous. Any disruption or breach of those essential communication links can quickly bring uncertainty, confusion, and doubt.

As we all know, the International Aerobatic Club (IAC) has, for a number of years now, maintained a presence on the World Wide Web. We are all well familiar with our IAC website and, sadly, we are all aware that, but for the occasional news blurb, contest schedule, or organizational modification, little has changed on our website over the course of the past few years. While regrettable, there is a reason such has been the case. And it has not been failure to recognize the need, nor any lack of will to act.

Many, I venture to say most, are completely unaware that, until only very recently, the International Aerobatic Club did not actually "own" the IAC website. As a division of the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA), the IAC's website was owned by, had been constructed and implemented by, was maintained and secured by, the EAA. Historically, the IAC has had no direct control over, very restricted access afforded to, and thus only limited opportunity to impact either the appearance, or the con-

tent, of our IAC website.

To the lasting credit of the EAA, it must be quickly acknowledged that, with only limited EAA IT staff on hand, staff members who were already tasked with multiple other very important chores, the EAA has continued, for a number of years, to maintain a web presence for the IAC, keep the site up and running, provide regular data backups, and facilitate numerous news and data updates upon reasonable request and with reasonable notice. That the EAA was able to do so without specific additional charge to the IAC for these valuable services is remarkable, and very much appreciated. As are the efforts, both past and continuing, of those same overworked EAA staff members who continue to support and assist us even today.

Recognizing that, in today's culture, one of the primary means of organizational communication is via the Internet, recognizing the need that the IAC better position itself to more readily, more succinctly, and more broadly communicate with its membership, recognizing that, in order to do so, it would be necessary that we exercise a more direct measure of control over our own primary message delivery systems, and recognizing that we had, over time, become deficient in that regard, in October of 2011 at the IAC fall board meeting, and under the leadership of then IAC President Doug Bartlett, the IAC board of directors voted unanimously to establish a WEB Task Force charged with the mandate of creating a new, world-class web experience for our membership by the creation and implementation of a much improved, brand new, IAC web presence.

The first to be recruited to the newly created IAC board's WEB Task Force was current WEB Team leader Doug Lovell. The list grew quickly as others, excited in anticipation of the many potential new opportunities which we believed now lay before us, volunteered their time and abilities as well. A number of team members came aboard in relatively short order, including Mike Heuer, Lorrie Penner, D.J. Molny, Steve Johnson, Laurie Zaleski, Rafael Soldan, Darren Pleasance, Jim Ward, Reggie Paultk, Lynn Bowes, Randy Owens, Doug Sowder, Trisha Roberts, Patrick Carter, and Rob Holland. Always available, always involved, and without whom this effort could well have proven to be a non-starter, was our IAC executive director, Trish Deimer-Steineke.

For the past year, the IAC WEB Team has worked diligently to accomplish the task ordered by the IAC board of directors, quite a few of whom also volunteered to serve, each giving their full support and each working long and hard to ensure the WEB Team's success. Many hours have been spent, and continue to be spent, in meetings, planning sessions, and discussions, both in person and via teleconference. Groups and subgroups within the WEB Team each conducted their own extensive series of meetings, apart from the larger group.

In early discussions, the IAC WEB Team identified several immediate goals, as well as other short-term and long-term

goals for the project. One of the first of these goals was to create a new web design, a new "look and feel," for our new website. Laurie Zaleski and Rafael Soldan, under the leadership of Jim Ward, accepted this task and set straight to work and, in short order, presented the WEB Team multiple new web designs for comment. Rafael worked extensively to prepare the mock-up pages for review, and Laurie accepted the added responsibility of compiling and cataloging new photographs and graphic content.

Doug Lovell and D.J. Molny set about to inventory and document all existing IAC web services, documents, and data and to determine which of these elements we would need to keep, and new elements to be added. Doug Sowder took on the laborious task of reviewing and verifying content of existing IAC Policies and Procedures. On the technical side, Doug Lovell, D.J. Molny, Randy Owen, and Bob Buckley extensively discussed and ultimately identified and selected the most appropriate web backbone and content management software to be utilized, as well as the identification and selection of appropriate web hosting requirements and services.

Lorrie Penner accepted the position as our new web editor in chief and assembled an editorial team including Lynn Bowes, Trisha Roberts, and Trish Deimer-Steineke. These ladies reviewed and, as required, updated and corrected each and every web document in our inventory, including new and updated articles written or edited by Mike Heuer, Greg Koontz, Rich Stowell, Darren Pleasance, Steve Johnson, Gordon Penner, and Brian Howard, all of whom happily agreed to lend their extensive knowledge and impressive writing skills to the project.

D.J. Molny accepted the board's appointment as the IAC's first webmaster and has, since that time, spent countless hours writing programming code and implementing the new web design prepared by Jim Ward's look and feel team. Reggie Paultk worked diligently to ensure continuity of message and proper interface among all the IAC media outlets, including *In the Loop* and *Sport Aerobatics*, while Steve Johnson addressed usability and membership expectation issues, and the integration of the "Airplanes Break" forum over which he, as the IAC safety director, presides. Patrick Carter and Rob Holland came on board, each volunteering to head up new web initiatives that should prove extremely valuable to the membership in the coming months and years, and of which you will be hearing more in the near future.

In addition to the WEB Team members mentioned here, a number of longtime IAC sponsors and financial supporters have also stepped up to take part in the new IAC website roll-out. We very much appreciate their support, and you will find their advertisements prominently displayed. As of this writing, home page web advertisements will include MT-Propeller, Southeast Aero, Extra Aircraft, and Paraphernalia (Softie) Parachutes. Other advertising opportuni-

ties exist, and others have expressed interest. Stand by for updates in this regard.

The first roll-out of our soon-to-be-released, new IAC website is to be a “parity” release. While you will immediately notice some of the many changes, and you will see some new content and graphics, the intent of this initial parity release is not to introduce new features, but simply to implement the new format and to test its level of user-friendliness and “click-ability.”

The upcoming release is essentially a beta release. So, please understand the potential exists that we may have missed something along the way. You may find the occasional orphan page or broken link. But, don’t be dismayed. Our IAC webmaster, D.J. Molny, has provided a handy online means by which you can report any discrepancies or problems you may encounter. With your help in this regard, we can ensure that we have prepared the best possible web experience. Additionally, if you have thoughts or ideas for new features, or improvements to suggest for existing features, please feel free to submit them as well.

We value our members and are committed to preserving the value of IAC membership while, at the same time, inviting the world to join us. Accordingly, a significant portion of the content on the new IAC website is to be restricted to members only. You will find a prominent log-in area that will grant access to the member-only content. An official announcement will be forthcoming regarding the process and schedule for IAC member, and visitor, website registration.

On behalf of the IAC, we want to take a moment to say a special thank-you to all these who have worked so hard and have achieved so much on our behalf. Through the preparation and presentation of this upcoming parity release, staff members Reggie Paultk and Trish Deimer-Steineke accepted the additional workload without complaint, and without additional compensation. And, each volunteer member of the IAC WEB Team similarly served diligently, well, and faithfully and has given freely of themselves and of their valuable time. And, each has done so simply for the love of the sport and for the IAC membership, and at no financial cost to the International Aerobatic Club.

When you happen to see any member of your IAC WEB Team, please communicate with them. Please let them know how much you appreciate their service, and their contribution and efforts on our behalf, as they, per order of the IAC’s officers and directors, strive to facilitate improved communication among us. Let WEB Team Leader Doug Lovell, WEB Editor in Chief Lorrie Penner, and the IAC’s first official WEB Master D.J. Molny know of your appreciation, your support, and your thoughts.

And, I trust that, when you have had a bit of time to peruse the new IAC website, finally hosted on web servers commissioned and controlled by the IAC, when you have had opportunity to review the new content we have planned, you will be able to remark, “Well said.”

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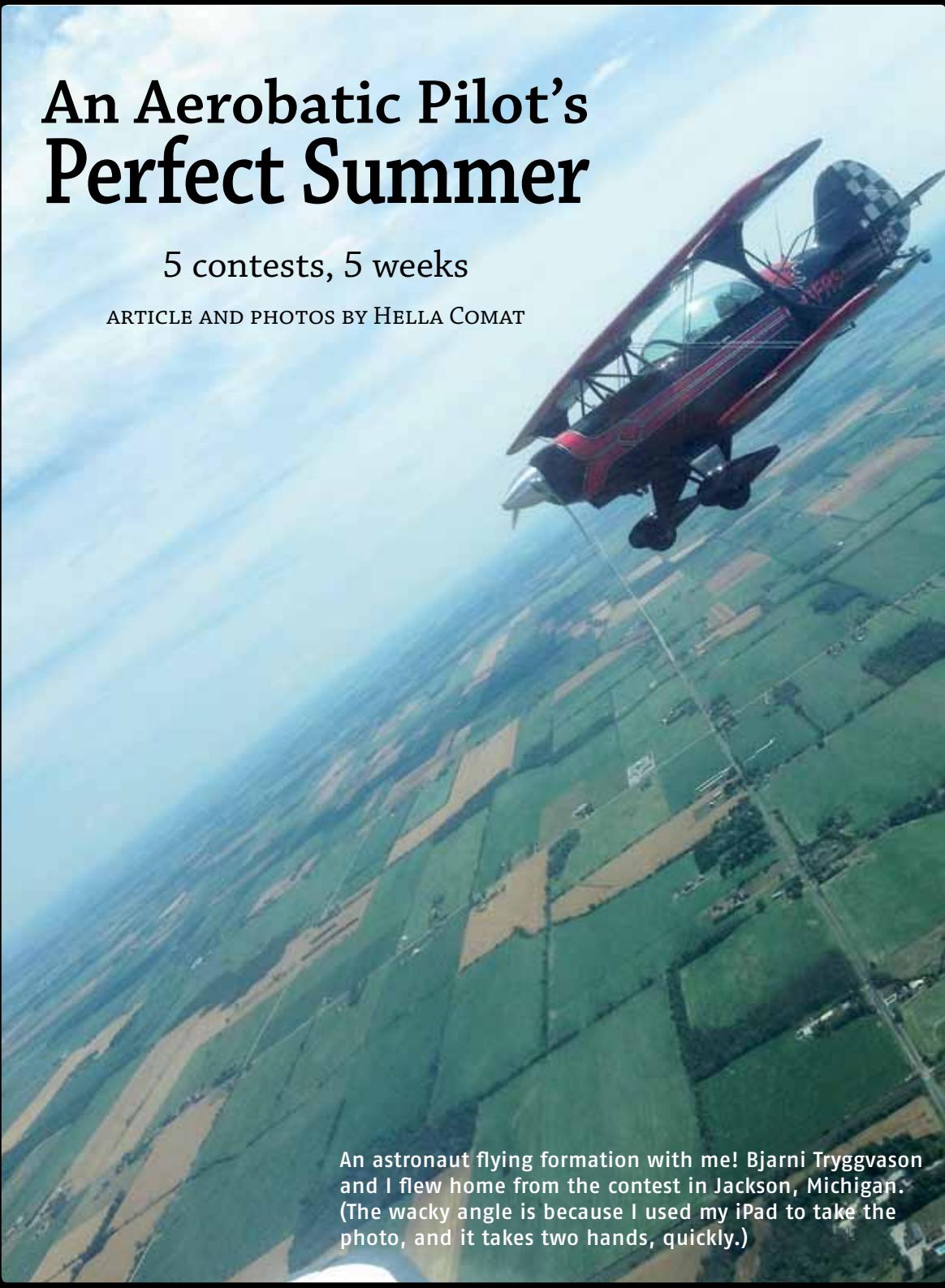
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An astronaut flying formation with me! Bjarni Tryggvason and I flew home from the contest in Jackson, Michigan. (The wacky angle is because I used my iPad to take the photo, and it takes two hands, quickly.)

Wow! Could I possibly do it? Five aerobatic contests in five consecutive weekends? Last spring I was checking the schedule of aerobatic contests and making up my wish list. Living in

southern Ontario, I have been able to get to contests in both the Mid-America and Northeast regions over the past five years that I've been competing. But this year, it looked like June and

July were going to be busy. Between June 15 and July 15, there were five contests I might be able to get to. It was a great challenge, especially considering that every trip would mean

border crossings, a couple of the destinations were more than 300 nautical miles and a mountain range away, and there would always be the summer weather. But could my little Pitts and I do it?

Contest 1: Ohio Open, Marysville, Ohio Chapter 34

This was the site of the very first contest I had attended five years ago, and the welcoming people and great organization of this event every year had me keen to return. For these reasons and its central location, it's always a well-attended event, too.

This would also be the only chance I'd get to fly most of the way with another competitor. There are few aerobatic pilots in southern Ontario, and even fewer that seem to have such a flexible, generous employer as I have, so I'm almost always travelling alone. However, my friend Bill, who lives about an hour's flight west of my home base, was coming along. We worked out a great way to connect: I called on UNICOM to his airport when I was about 25 miles out. Bill was ready to go, fired up, and by the time I was overhead, he was on his takeoff roll.

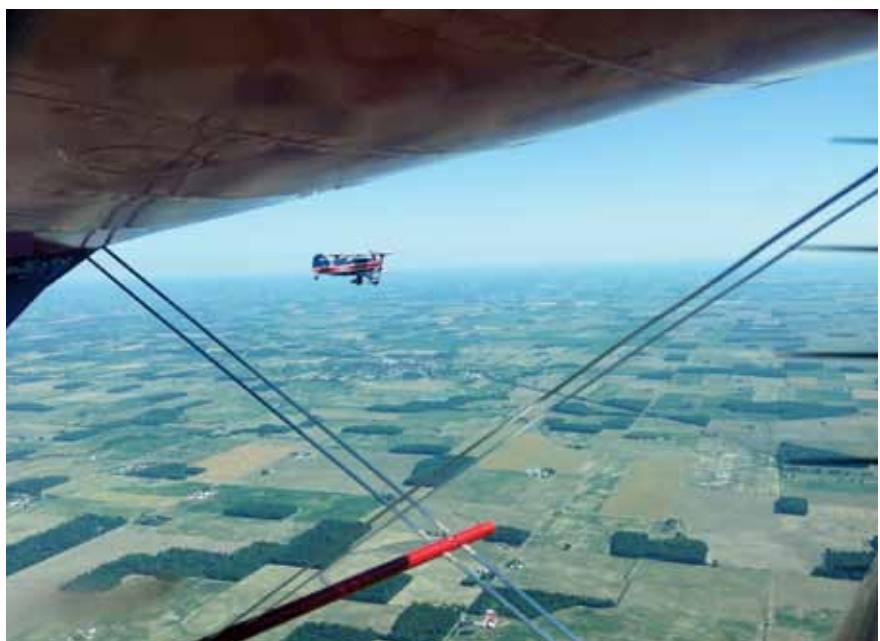
The next part of the trip was crossing Lake Erie to Sandusky, Ohio. I'm a bit of a chicken when it comes to flying over water; well, actually I'm a really big chicken. I prefer to fly as high as I can get, but usually in the summer, over the Great Lakes, this isn't an option due to cloud cover. However, having Bill flying alongside in his Pitts S-1T, which is just two serial numbers from mine, seemed to make it a lot less nerve-racking. Illogical, I know, but it's all I've got.

In what other sport could I arrive at the registrar's table and have a volunteer, who I've never met before, say, "You flew in from Canada? Come stay at our place! You don't need a motel." Wow, awesome people!

Mother Nature toyed with us Friday and Saturday, alternating beautiful blue skies with sudden thunderstorms, but we had a great contest.



Crossing Lake Erie en route to our first contest of the year—island hopping from Point Pelee to Sandusky.



Flying over Ohio with Bill and his S-1T that is very closely related to mine (two serial numbers apart).

Three flights for everyone in five categories, as well as three incredible 4-Minute Freestyles by the Unlimited pilots.

Contest 2: U.S./Canadian Challenge, Olean, New York Chapter 126

Two days at work, then back to practice flights, and I left on Thursday

for Olean, New York. This is my home chapter, so I was hoping to do my little part in helping to run the contest. I managed to do all the photocopying for our new registrar, and I gathered some draw prizes, including a large, mounted propeller blade. But with a Pitts S-1T, the logistics of getting all this and my weekend backpack to the contest required some help. Thanks to the ever-present hardworking volun-



Arriving at our Buffalo Wings Contest at Olean in beautiful western New York. Look carefully and you'll see the three front box markers along the runway.



Chapter 126 pilot Roy brought along his Brothers in Jazz band for Saturday night's live entertainment.

teers driving down from my area who helped out in taking the contest stuff.

Pat Barrett, our amazing president, started Chapter 126 just three short years ago, and now we've hosted three consecutive contests.

Not to boast (well, maybe just a bit), but some of our unique contest features this year included:

- Chicken wings (our chapter is named after the world famous Buffalo wings) deep-fried right on the ramp Friday night.

- An airport support group who cooked breakfast and lunch both days, as well as our banquet featuring the local specialty—beef on weck (Don't know what it is? Come find out!)

right in the main hangar.

- Rob, an incredible pilot/volunteer and excellent "chef," who provided make-your-own-sandwich fixings, homemade salads, and a cheese tray delivered to your lawn chair as you watched the contest flying.

- Roy's jazz band providing live entertainment in the hangar after the Saturday night banquet.

- Great draw prizes like a Hooker harness, David Clark headset, Sky-Tec starter, and many more!

The Olean airport sits on a hilltop at more than 2,100 feet of elevation amid the gorgeous, green forests of New York state. We seem to attract a variety of wildlife every year: In our first year, a boundary judge spied a bear crossing the runway (shouldn't the judge have been looking UP?). The next year a tiny black kitten appeared out of the woods. After making every attempt to find its owners, we "guilted" Fred, one of the local airport volunteers, into adopting him. The kitten was named OLE (Olean's airport identifier) and is a very content, friendly member of Fred's family to this day. This year, a baby barn swallow fell out of a nest in the hangar. Laurie Zaleski, IAC photographer and animal rescuer extraordinaire, took care of the baby (which she appropriately named Snap Roll), FLEW it home in her Bonanza, and brought it to the next contest! When it was old enough, she was able to let it go.

Everyone was able to fly three flights, and it was another success for our fledgling chapter.

Contest 3: Wildwoods Acroblast, Cape May, New Jersey Chapter 58

Only time for one day at work this week (my two bosses are the BEST!), then two days of practice and it's off to the next one on Thursday.

Should you ever feel burdened by planning a VFR flight to a contest, consider the requirements of border crossings these days. Here's what I need to do each time:

- File online arrival report with EA-PIS, describing personal, airplane, and flight itinerary details, and I mean details, about the trip. Even the address information of the motel where I'm staying is required!

- Await e-mail approval from EAPIS.
- Telephone notification to customs at the airport of arrival.
- Required VFR flight plan filing for the border crossing leg of the trip.
- Transponder code from ATC en route before border crossing.

Actually, it's not so bad. Having done it so many times now, even as a mere private pilot, I'm okay with all the hoops I have to jump through. I'm just thrilled that I have the opportunity to do this. And on every cross-country flight, I pinch myself to remind me, "Hey, you're flying a Pitts! Aren't you the lucky one!"

My next fuel stop was Williamsport, Pennsylvania, located in a very scenic valley of the Allegheny Mountain range. There was some haze and low cloud, but the fuel fellow was more than friendly, especially considering that my 10 gallons or so were probably not even worth driving the truck out onto the ramp! Fantastic airport people again: He gave me a Sean Tucker ball cap, saying that Sean had been by the week before and he figured I had more use for it considering what I flew! Nice.

The Wildwoods contest is another not-to-be-missed event. KWWD is located on the Cape May Peninsula that pokes into Delaware Bay on one side and the Atlantic Ocean on the other—a summer vacationer's paradise of endless beaches. Will Morey, owner of Morey's Piers and a number of the hotels on the beach strip, provides a *lot* of support for the contest, including passes to the theme park on the beach for the families of attending pilots. Now there's a fantastic perk! And he flies a beautiful Pitts S-2C.

It was a hot, hot weekend, but then we could dip into the Atlantic at the end of the day. How wonderful is that! Twenty-four pilots and three flights each—excellent work by the organizers, judges, and volunteers.



I've finally arrived at the Atlantic—the beautiful beach at Cape May. Wildwood airport is just a few miles inland from the beach strip.



I met up with Snap Roll again in Cape May. He fell out of his nest at Olean, and Laurie rescued and relocated him.



Crossing the border north of Detroit at the Ambassador Bridge in Sarnia, Ontario. Selfridge Approach (Selfridge Air National Guard Base) gave me a transponder code and permission to cross.

Contest 4: Michigan Aerobatic Open, Jackson, Michigan Chapter 88

Two days at work, then time to get ready for the next event. Reynolds Field in Jackson, Michigan, is unusual but wonderful for a contest site in that it has a control tower. The comfort in knowing that another pair of professional eyes is watching out for us when we're in the aerobatic box is immeasurable.

Contest Director Don Weaver made this event three days of nonstop fun! For Thursday evening, he organized a tour of Chateau Aeronautique Winery. It is located on a small grass strip just north of Jackson and is owned by an airline pilot. Friday night found us at Ye Ole Carriage Shop, a private car museum featuring cars manufactured in Jackson—who knew?—and pedal cars. We enjoyed our pizza supper in the museum's soda bar, surrounded by a huge collection of Coca-Cola memorabilia. Banquet night was at a beautiful country club, where we were entertained by Bjarni Tryggvason, one of our own Canadian astronauts who spent 12 days on the space shuttle in 1997 on mission STS-85. Bjarni's presentation included amazing photographs he took of earth from space. He also talked about being selected to pilot the Silver Dart to commemorate 100 years of flight

in Canada. The Silver Dart is Canada's version of the Wright Flyer, and on a cold day in February 2009 Bjarni successfully flew the Silver Dart from a frozen bay in Nova Scotia.

Again, superb contest organization allowed for all five categories to fly three flights each. My low point of the contest was earning my first zero of the season—having a mental lapse and flying the first figure in the Intermediate Unknown incorrectly! I wasted the rest of the sequence trying to figure out how I could have made such a dumb mistake. Thank goodness I couldn't foresee that I'd do it again in another contest.

The most memorable part of an amazing weekend was the flight home. Bjarni, who is flying his Pitts S-2A in his second year of aerobatic competition, flew home in formation with me. I had an astronaut flying in close formation with me in our Pittses! Doesn't get any cooler than that.

Contest 5: Green Mountain Aerobatic Contests, Springfield, Vermont Chapter 35

Just enough time for an oil change and a quick two days at work (Why do they put up with me?) and some more practice. I'm especially lucky to have a fantastic friend and coach—Gerry Younger. Gerry is a multi-time



Final approach to Hartness State Airport in Springfield, Vermont. The aerobatic box is to the left of the runway.

Canadian national Unlimited champion and attended WACs in the United States, the former Soviet Union, and in England. I'm so fortunate to be the recipient of his knowledge and experience. Before a flight, Gerry asks me what specific maneuvers or parts of them I plan to focus on. During my practice sequence, he takes the time to watch and critique—so invaluable in a sport where the judge's view from the ground is what counts. My world's-best-coach even drives 10 minutes way over to the other side of the airport to get the best view at centre box. Afterward, he makes sure I've reflected on the flight and answers any questions. Finally, having an expert around who has built five Pitts Specials is an outstanding resource. I'm constantly learning about the airplane, and I've got such a long way to go.

Then it was off to Vermont. I'd never been to this contest—it's in such a scenic part of the country. Flying in a box with a large hill on one side and a bigger one on the other took some getting used to. I usually line up the sighting device with a level horizon, not one with mountaintops sticking up all over. How do the local pilots do it?

I didn't know it could get so hot in Vermont in July, but the excellent weather combined with hard-working organizers got 31 pilots to complete all flights. The Sportsman category alone had 13 pilots! The Northeast aerobatic



Flying home from Vermont—no road or sign of humans in sight.



Last leg of the five-contest marathon—Toronto, Ontario.

community is thriving.

My final trip home of my aerobatic marathon would end up being the most daunting. I left early Sunday morning, before the final Sportsman flights, as weather was forecast to deteriorate. I changed my course to fly north of Lake Ontario instead of south, the way I had come, to try to avoid thunderstorms—which had already appeared in the Buffalo area. I landed at Watertown, New York, for fuel and to check weather and complete my border crossing chores. My first challenge was to find somebody. The main terminal was deserted, and I couldn't even see a fuel truck or tank. I started the hot engine back up to taxi/wander around to find the FBO, which was cleverly hiding behind some hangars. I then wandered through the offices and hangars looking for someone—anyone. I was beginning to think I'd entered a parallel, uninhabited universe when I finally found the young man in charge of the fuel truck.

When I finally got going again, crossing the border at Kingston, Ontario, things began to look grim. I flew through areas of low cloud and limited visibilities as I fol-

lowed the north shoreline of the lake. Thank goodness for flight following; as I neared Toronto, I was warned that there was a line of very active cells

a wall of black sky approached from the west, I convinced the young man on duty that tying down my Pitts was not a good idea, and I would really appreciate a space in a hangar. He kindly found me an empty T-hangar and we got my baby inside just as the storm arrived. I would end up sitting at the airport for more than seven hours, waiting for the last leg of my trip to clear.

I ended up being able to get to another four contests in August, September, and October, but missed my goal of 10. I wimped out of the last one—a long, cold flight in mid-October to Virginia. But my “five contests in five consecutive weeks” marathon was a huge success for me! Every single event allowed all pilots to fly all flights. Everywhere I went, I was reminded what a remarkable, enthusiastic, and well-oiled machine each IAC chapter is. Competition aerobatics is a small community for a number of reasons, but it is a group of people who are keen to work hard to share their passion in a thrilling yet safe way. Thank you all! Of course it's about the flying, but as I consider my memory of the summer, it's the amazing people and the good times that I remember the best. **IAC**



Unpacking upon arrival at a contest—contrary to popular belief, the Pitts S-1T can hold a lot of baggage!

with many lightning strikes and heavy downpours ahead. I quickly landed at Oshawa, where I again played the “look for a human being” game. As

2011 IAC Non-Flying Awards

Excellence in service

BY LORRIE PENNER



Doug Vayda accepts the award on behalf of Walter Extra.

Curtis Pitts Memorial Trophy: Walter Extra

Walter Extra has always viewed aviation from his own special perspective. As one of the world's most successful competitive aerobatic pilots, he decided in the 1980s to design and build his own aircraft. What began as an experimental one-man operation has since grown into an international success story. Today, that initiative has become the championship-based Extra aircraft lineup. Walter Extra is a pilot, designer, and builder of aerobatic airplanes with many similarities to Curtis Pitts' aerobatic journey. In a way, Walter started where Curtis left off—by building and flying a Pitts S-1. Walter's craftsmanship was unequivocally German! Following his participation at the 1980 World Aerobatic Championships and inspired by Leo Loudenslager's Laser, Walter went home to design his single-seat monoplane. The Extra 230 was built using conventional material just like a Pitts...steel tube fuselage and a wood wing. Always

needing more horsepower, the Extra 260 was built using a blend of steel tube fuselage, wood wing, composite aileron, and tail feathers. Just like Betty Skelton did for the Pitts, Patty Wagstaff flew the Extra 260 to the top aerobatic crown. Both aircraft (Pitts S-1 *Little Stinker* and the Extra 260) are exhibited in the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum collection. But it was only when the certified composite wing Extra 300 came to life that this monoplane became an aerobatic powerhouse and reference standard...just like when Curtis certified the Pitts S-2A. Walter is still flying, designing, building, and refining a great aerobatic masterpiece.



Nikolay Timofeev

Frank Price Cup: Nikolay Timofeev

Nikolay earned his master's degree in both aeronautical engineering and mechanical engineering. He was also one of the engineers who worked on the development of the Su-26M for Sukhoi.

Nikolay has been a world-class com-

petitor, winning the Unlimited World Aerobatic Championships in 1992 and 1996. He won the Unlimited World Aerobatic Championships in 1995 and the gold medal at the World Air Games in 1997. Nikolay now performs in air shows around the world. He also teaches training clinics to serious aerobatic pilots and performs the best top-level maintenance and engineering on most, if not all, Sukhoi 26s, 29s, 31s and many Yaks in the United States.

Nikolay Timofeev eats, breathes, and sleeps aerobatics. Specifically competition-style aerobatics. He has worked tirelessly to promote and train the U.S. Advanced Aerobatic Team for 2012. He conducted their training camps, helped with freestyles, coordinated travel and international details, and even worked on their mental mindset and competition strategy. His commitment to the individual goes beyond the typical coach. He does not just want you to fly one figure or maneuver well; he wants you to be a better pilot overall. He is oriented to the big picture.

Robert L. Heuer Award for Judging Excellence: Doug Sowder

Doug learned to fly in 1967 ad is a multi-engine and instrument-rated pilot. An IAC member since 1988, he flies an Extra 200L in the Advanced category, participating as a U.S. Advanced Team member in 2004 at Sweden and 2010 at Poland. He has been a judge at the U.S. Nationals for eight years. He continues every competition season to serve as a judge or chief judge at every contest he attends.

Doug's judging record in 2011 shows that he judged five different



Doug Sowder accepted the award from Mike Heuer, son of the award's namesake.

contests in five different categories, including glider. At the 2011 U.S. Nationals he judged the Unlimited Power category to help select the 2012 U.S. Unlimited Aerobatic Team. He also perfectly picked the rankings of the five 4-Minute Free competitors. During his judging career he has judged more than 100 flights, almost half of those in the Unlimited category. In 2011 Doug judged 16 Unlimited flights, more flights than any other judge. Doug applies the rules fairly with good judgment.

Harold E. Neumann Award for Outstanding Contribution as a Chief Judge: Jim Ward

Flying since '77. Joined IAC coincident with buying his first airplane, a Decathlon, in '86 while searching for a new way to enjoy aviation. Been here ever since. Flew his first contest in '92; he has been contest directing and judging since the mid-90s. Moved to Seattle in '05 after meeting his wife, Ann Marie, at a contest. Jim is now flying an Extra in Intermediate.

Jim Ward has chief judged 15 contests over the past six years, three of them in 2011. As a chief judge, Jim is calm, efficient, fair, and always helpful to his judges. He knows the rules and is a stickler for them, and his reasoning and decisions are beyond reproach.



Jim Ward with Lorrie Penner

Additionally, he has been conducting judging refreshers/seminars, using actual demonstration flights on contest practice days. He conducted at least four of these in 2011. These sessions are of great benefit to new and seasoned judges alike.



Aaron McCartan and Lorrie Penner

Kathy Jaffe Volunteer Award: Lorrie Penner

Lorrie has been with the IAC since 2002. Her contest experience includes registrar and scoring direc-

tor for numerous Mid-America contests between the years of 2003 and 2011, as well as registrar/scoring for the Olean, New York, contest in 2010 and 2011, and registrar/scoring for Hanover, Ontario, Canada, in 2011. International contest support includes the 2003 Lakeland WAC and volunteer coordinator at the 2008 AWAC in Pendleton, Oregon. Lorrie served as IAC secretary from 2006 to 2008 and as Achievement Award chair since 2007, and she accepted the appointment for Annual Awards chair in October 2011. Additionally she serves on the WEB Team in the current IAC website rework as content editor. On a local level, she serves as the webmaster for IAC 34. Lorrie has been an integral part of IAC 34's contest in Ohio every year. She is registrar extraordinaire. She has helped other chapters such as 88, 124, and 126 to get organized and even has done registrar duties when they had no one. She is friendly, welcoming, and super organized.

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Back row, L to R: Hector Ramirez (alternate), Goody Thomas, Rob Holland, Mike Stevenson (Team Manager), David Martin, and Robert Armstrong
Front row, L to R: Michael Racy, Melissa Pemberton, Debby Rihn-Harvey, and Nikolay Timofeev



LAURIE ZALESKY PHOTOS

TEAM 2013

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MEET A MEMBER

BY GARY DEBAUN, IAC #4145

DANIEL WISEHART



Gary DeBaun (DB): Daniel, we'll start out with the standard question. How did you get started in aerobatics?

Daniel Wisehart (DW): Right after I got my private pilot's certificate in 1997, I went to Arkansas and flew with Bobby Younkin's crew in a 10-hour aerobatic course in an S-1A.

GD: Did you have any aviation heroes when you were growing up?

DW: No one a young guy like you would remember: Art Scholl and—amazingly—Bob Hoover. I think Bob has lived about three lifetimes during his career. Didn't he fly with the Wright brothers?

GD: Where and when did you fly your first contest, and what airplane did you fly it in?

DW: Borrego Springs Akrofest, spring contest in 2008. In the Sunrise Aviation Super Decathlon, 161SA, that so many pilots from SoCal have started out in. I beat Greg Bushouse—who was flying the same airplane—by something like two points out of 1,700; a story he retells every time I see him.

GD: Daniel, I have tech-inspected your Pitts at many contests. It is probably one of the most modified S-1Ss I've ever seen. Give us a brief rundown on all the modifications.

DW: You need to order more paper if we are going to print that list. Recent mods include a WolfPitts cowling; Light Speed Aviation Plasma III electronic ignition—which rocks; Twisted Composites 7664 propeller. Did I mention I have N6DD torn down right now to re-cover, paint, and change it out to Harmon spring gear using the Bret Davenport mod? Besides, I can't give away all of my secrets.

GD: At the Nationals last year you came to volunteer your time as a judge; not to fly. Did you enjoy the contest? Did you learn anything that may help you, and do you ever see yourself flying at the Nationals?

DW: It was a lot of fun. As a national judge—something that every aerobatic pilot should take the time to become—I got to judge a ton of flights including my own category—Intermediate—that never happens. What I learned is the top four or five pilots fly incredibly well; the rest of us have a lot of catching up to do. It validated why I did not compete at Nationals this year: I don't just want to compete; I want to be in the hunt for the gold.

GD: What is your favorite contest and why?

DW: All of them where aerobatic friends—old friends and new ones I haven't met yet—show up and fly.

GD: Do you have any other interests other than flying?

DW: My work; my daughter who is doing great in her second year of college and flying. That's all the time I have.

Daniel Wisehart

Occupation: Financial Trading

IAC 25220

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Chapter Affiliation: 120 (also belongs to Chapter 36)



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